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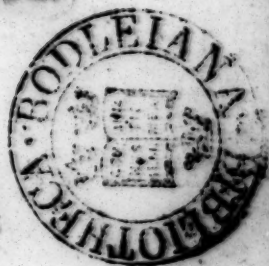
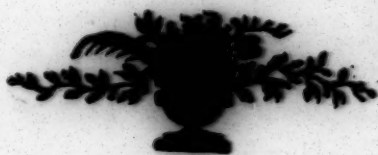
The Whisperer.

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THE
WHISPERER;

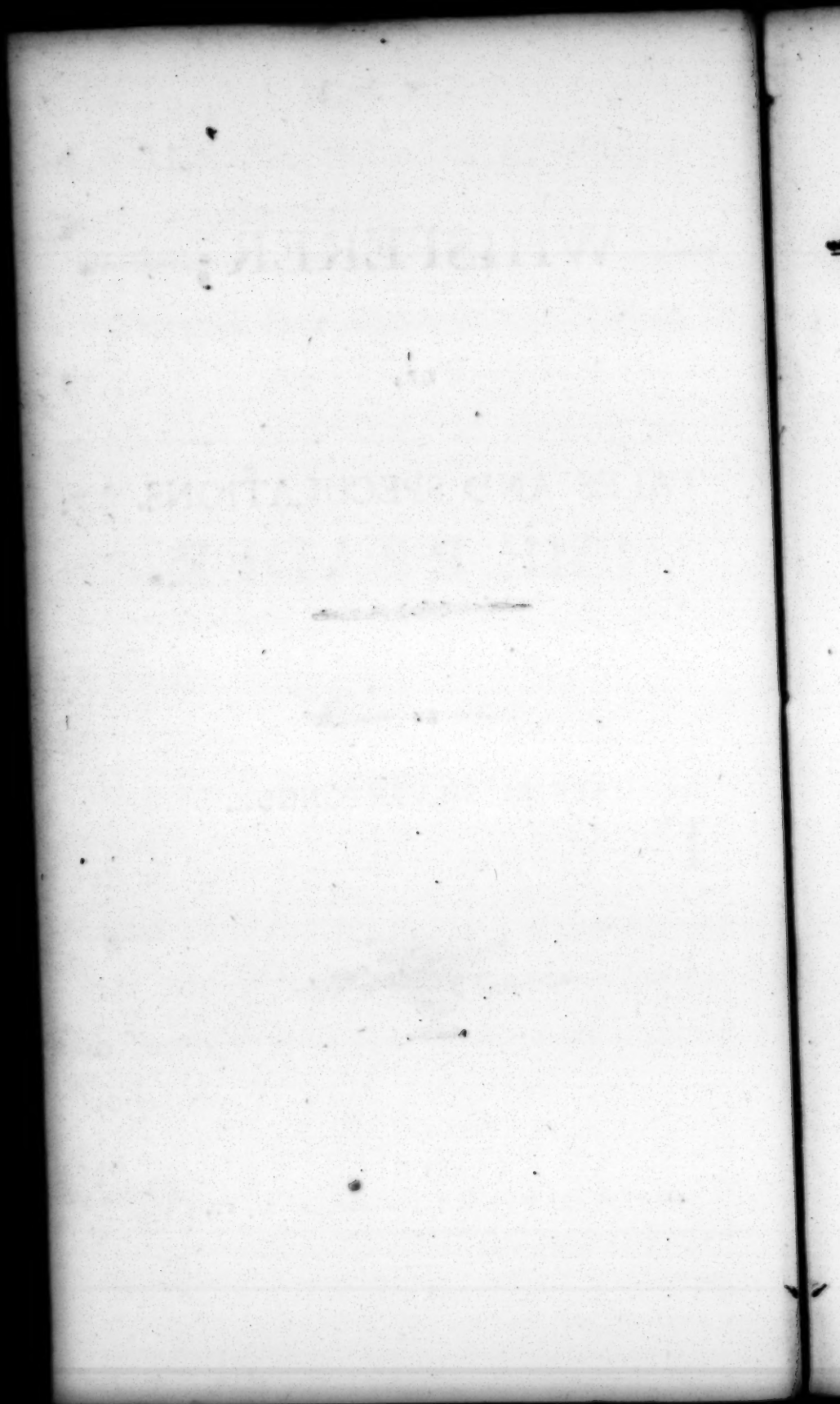
OR,
TALES AND SPECULATIONS.

BY
GABRIEL SILVERTONGUE.



LONDON:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST.
PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1798.



TO

THE READER.



THE EDITOR of the following sheets has nothing to plead in their favour: insignificant and unfinished as they are, the Reader, he believes, will be little disposed to censure, and less inclined to commend, them. The motives, which induced him to publish these fragments, at the present time, though

though interesting to himself, are of no importance to the world.

THERE is some degree of merit in acknowledging our unworthiness—there is a portion of magnanimity in avowing our weakness: that humble magnanimity, that unenviable merit, will surely be allowed to the Editor, when he candidly confesses, that although, in the presumption of youth and the folly of his heart, he stepped into the grave and venerable character of a Public Censor, with elevated hopes and sanguine enthusiasm, yet the painful production of a few Essays quickly convinced him, that he was not less unhappily deficient in knowledge and abilities, than unqualified by years and experience, for the arduous task which he had assumed. Under this humiliating sense of infirmity, his imagination drooped—

his

his pen languished—and **GABRIEL SILVERTONGUE**, lapt in a lethargy of dulness, was indolently nodding himself into the grave of oblivion, when a sudden and severe misfortune, which overwhelmed the Editor, precipitated his fall.

MANY of these Papers were originally published, according to the dates they bear, in a provincial Journal; and the present edition of the first volume, which kept pace with the work in its periodical progress, was nearly printed off, when the irrecoverable blow, alluded to, administered the *coup de grace* to poor **GABRIEL SILVERTONGUE!**

SINCE that period, the **WHISPERER** has slumbered in clean sheets; and, though an accident has awakened him, he will probably

bably only yawn—turn round—and fall asleep again: if so—the last trumpet itself will not be loud enough to interrupt his immortal repose!

WITH respect to the contents of the present volume, it is necessary to acknowledge, that part of the first, and the whole of the third number were furnished by a Gentleman, whose learning and talents would, probably, have exalted the WHISPERER to a dignified rank among periodical writers, had not circumstances rendered it inconvenient for him to contribute his assistance.—The letter of Mrs. Quackett in the tenth number, that of Tendressa Handy in the thirteenth, and the Vision of Nugator in the eighteenth, were furnished by ingenious Correspondents. The Chimera, or a Tale of a Looking Glass, in No. 23, appeared originally

originally in *Dr. Anderson's BEE*, in November, 1792. It was written and transmitted to the Doctor two years before, when the author was only a boy:—in point of style, it has now been considerably altered; and those readers, who may have an opportunity of comparing both editions, will, perhaps, allow that the present is less faulty than the former. Whatever errors and imperfections may be discovered in this Tale, or in any other part of the labours of GABRIEL SILVERTONGUE—the Letters and Essays above mentioned excepted—let them be attributed to the inexperience and inability of One, whose name and character the Public will, probably, never take the trouble to enquire.

S——, May 6, }
1798.

ERRATA.



Page 24, Line 2, for *number* read *member*.

— 54, — 6, for *naivette* read *naivete*.

— 67, — 20, for *have* read *had*.

— 69, — 7, for *thached* read *thatched*.

— 144, — 11, for *And, &c.* read *And a &c.*

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THE
WHISPERER,

—
No. I.

Thursday, May 28, 1795:

*Some introductory account of the Family of the
Silvertongues, and the intended Speculations of
the Whisperer.*

IT has been an ancient and well approved custom, among my ingenious predecessors of periodical memory, to dedicate their first essay to themselves, and therein discover just so much concerning their birth, parentage and education as cannot fail to awaken in the breast of the curious reader an earnest desire of better acquaintance. Now though I do not intend in the course of my speculations to confine myself

A implicitly

implicitly to the path or the practice of any former writer, however glorious and successful his career may have been, I shall, nevertheless, in compliance with this venerable custom, introduce myself to the public with as much engaging diffidence, and as meek a recommendation of my character and abilities as can be expected of any man from his own pen. It is almost impossible for a person to speak of himself with a good grace: some modest authors, and among the rest the late renowned Laureate, Colley Cibber, after having persecuted the public with innumerable volumes of dulness, flippancy and impertinence, have written *Apologies* for their own lives: my life shall be my apology for my writings.

I was born about the middle of the eighteenth century in the village where I now reside, which is delightfully situated near a large manufacturing town in a celebrated Island, placed by Geographers between the German and Atlantic Oceans. My father was a plain country Gentleman, who lived upon a comfortable patrimony, which had been piously delivered down from father to son, thro' a long and venerable
line

line of ancestry, without much improvement or diminution. He was an easy, good humoured man who amused away life in all the luxury of indolence. Twice a year he accompanied his neighbour Lord R. in the fox chase; and, being a Justice of the Quorum, regularly filled with becoming dignity the respectable chair of Peace at the General Quarter Sessions for the County. The rest of his days evaporated in tobacco smoke or were employed in tenderly nursing the gout, which has been an inmate in our family for several centuries, being first imported from France in the great toe of Sir Toby Silvertongue, one of the gallant companions of Henry the fifth, when Prince of Wales; and afterwards one of the bravest of those soldiers who followed his fortunes on the continent: indeed Sir Toby was knighted by that monarch for his valiant feats in the battle of Agincourt. I could fill a volume with the intrigues and adventures of this illustrious luminary of our house, who was one of the greatest wits and finest gentlemen of his age. But my present business is rather to introduce myself to the acquaintance of my readers; and

since we shall probably jog on together for a journey of considerable extent, I am determined it shall not be my fault if a good understanding be not cultivated between us at the outset. For this purpose I deem it necessary to be open and explicit; and having neither any interest nor any wish to deceive, I shall be as impartial as frail human nature will permit in every thing which relates to myself.

Those who have but an imperfect knowledge of me, I believe, take me for a humourist and laugh at what they call my oddities and peculiarities. They who are more intimately acquainted with me know that I generally act upon very steady and consistent principles, and that some occasional appearances of eccentricity and singularity in my deportment arise merely from a determination, which I have long since formed, to regulate my own conduct by my own sentiments. My opinions, at least upon most subjects, I apprehend, are not very uncommon; and if actions or speeches founded upon these opinions and in perfect unison with them appear sometimes a little extravagant and *outré* in the ordinary business of life, I beg leave

leave to ask who is most worthy to be laughed at, I who scorn to bend the dictates of my own reason to the changing humours of what the world terms *fashion*, or such persons as are ready to give up their most serious principles and best approved maxims of conduct to follow, like apes in leading strings, the guiding hand of some master or mistress of the puppet-show. Convince me that I am wrong; and that instant shall become the æra of my practical conversion. But never, while the noble blood of the Silvertongues flows in my veins, or I am blessed with a continuance of the powers of intellectual discrimination, can I permit myself to sacrifice the interests of truth or the dignity of a rational mind at the shrine of caprice or vanity, or for the purpose of accommodating myself to some pitiful but popular prejudice. With every thing of this sort I profess to wage an inveterate and eternal war; and it is one of my principal objects in undertaking the arduous task, which I have now begun, to endeavour to extend the empire of common sense; and whether by grave argument, jocular raillery, entertaining narratives or any other species of writing, to lead the

reflecting mind to the proper exercise and application of its powers. I shall, therefore, wander unrestrained through every path of improvement, over all the fairy wilderness of fancy, in every grove of instruction and on every mountain of knowledge. The universe is my theme and all nature presents the field of my speculations.

Whoever is able and at the same time willing to co-operate with me in the pursuit of the great objects which I have in view is hereby respectfully and most affectionately invited to lend me his assistance. But it may be proper for me to observe, that I shall not stand upon the point of ceremony with any one who may be inclined to correspond with me, or who may wish to second my intentions. The writings of such well meaning persons shall be used like my own. If they carry with them the sacred impression of genius, or that still brighter distinction, the power of usefulness, nothing more will be necessary to recommend them to myself or the public except, what will certainly be deemed essential,

essential, their being cloathed in the decent vesture of pure English.

If they should prove, in the estimation of a certain society with which I am connected, and which I shall distinguish by the name of *The Board of Criticism*, to be unworthy of the public eye they shall be consigned, at once, to that peaceful region where they will repose in quiet, together with a great many learned labours of my own and of thousands of other profound and somniferous writers--*the Land of Oblivion*. Sweet country of uninterrupted ease and endless rest! where angry pamphlets no longer tear each other to pieces; where duodecimos and octavos, which once set the world in a flame, now meet no other enemies than moth and mold; where ponderous quartos and tremendous folios no more discharge at each other the dreadful artillery of polemic rage, but where, retaining each the firm and undisputed possession of their own peculiar systems, they slumber side by side in perfect friendship amid the silent vales and shady woods of obscurity, no one daring or wishing to violate their happy retreat!

To

To this tranquil region, where the blessed spirits of departed volumes repose from their labours without any dread of resurrection or fear of judgment, I foresee, by the power of prophecy, that the speculations even of Gabriel Silvertongue will quickly pass. Till they shall experience this honourable translation they must be contented to act their part on this mortal stage and to meet, probably, many a jolt, and many a rub and many a sneer from idle wittlings and railing blockheads. It has always been the fate of the great, the wise and the good to experience opposition ; and I shall begin to doubt my claim to these characteristics if no one is kind enough to rise up for the purpose of putting me on my trial, and passing sentence of condemnation upon me in the most summary manner practised in our courts of law.

X.

No. II.

 No. II.

 Thursday, June 5, 1795.

*Hints concerning Title-pages, and a Whisper about
whispering.*

-----Nanum cujusdam Atlanta vocamus;
Æthiopem cygnum; parvam extortamque puellam
Europæ.

Juv.

THE title of a book is like the inscription on a tomb—"Here lies, in hope of a joyful resurrection, the body of A. B. C." Now as the virtue, faith and piety of many a modern saint never existed any where except upon his grave-stone, so all the wit, learning and genius of many a shining writer are to be found only in his title-page. Every manufacturer, except an author, claims a privilege to expatiate with all his technical eloquence upon the excellence of the materials, the elegance of the patterns and beauty of the workmanship of those articles which he brings to the public market. This licence of imposing upon customers is assumed by persons in every trade and profession, from

Dr.

Dr. Sangrado prescribing *blood and water* down to the humble vender of unstamped almanacks. The manufacturer of books, who spins his fancy into silken webs of verse or weaves his thoughts into the broad cloth of prose, is, alone, thought guilty of a breach of modesty if he even ventures to hint at the splendid merits of the workmanship of his hands and head: He is, therefore, compelled, by tyrannic custom, to shine forth in all his glory in the title-page in order to attract public attention. It is, on this account, easier to write a folio than to christen a duodecimo. If Homer be allowed, by his poetic license, to nod sometimes and make his reader nod at other times, surely the little sons of prose may be indulged in one delicious slumber from the commencement even to the conclusion of their labours, provided they occasionally walk about, chatter and play a few pranks in their sleep. But, in the title-page, it is absolutely requisite that the author should not only himself be thoroughly awake, but even endued with the magic art of awakening, alarming and suspending the curiosity of his future readers.

When

When the head hath conceived by the genial operation of fancy it brings forth volumes upon volumes, like mountains rising beyond mountains, with marvellous ease and expedition. But when the brain is brought to bed of a title-page then is the scene reversed: the mountains themselves are in labour, and with mighty pangs and agonizing convulsions that shake, like earthquakes, the whole empire of the pineal gland—a mouse is born!—New books shoot from the fertile pericranium with the velocity of the stone of Sisyphus, rebounding from the top of the hill: but it requires the toil and patience of Sisyphus himself in rolling back the stone, to invent a new and flaming title-page.

We know the power of Monarchs to create and bestow titles. One of the most illustrious Orders of Knights in Great Britain derive the pedigree of their insignia from a lady's garter: a Roman Emperor *, after triumphing over a prodigious army of cockle shells, which he utterly discomfited in a mighty battle on the shores of Gaul, intended to have conferred the Consulship upon his favourite horse: and one of our own facetious Princes rewarded a loin of beef

with

with the honour of knighthood for its eminent *table services* : a mark of distinction which its successors have inherited ever since, the hinder quarter of an ox being to this day worshipped by all pious beef-eaters under the title of Sir Loin ! Now, as every author is an absolute monarch in the kingdom of his own works, he may create and lavish titles according to his own pleasure ; nor can his *subjects* claim any right of repining or indulge any hope of redress. Jack the Giant Killer may be called Julius Cæsar ; the Children in the Wood may be metamorphosed into the Jews in Babylon ; the History of a Cock-fight may be baptized the Battle of Marathon, and the Narrative of a Fox-chace entitled the Retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks from Persia !

This proves, and the practice of innumerable authors whom I might name sanctions the position, that the title is wholly independent of the book ; and placed in front rather as a bait to catch purchasers than a bill of fare of the entertainment, which every reader expects when he is invited to a literary repast.—There is more virtue in names than is generally imagined. Small
wits

wits of the sixth and seventh magnitude are much better acquainted with this secret than great ones of the first and second: the latter are too apt to rely upon the intrinsic merit of their offspring, which frequently perish in the cradle for want of a lucky name to recommend them as objects of curiosity; while the ricketty bantlings of the former, plumed with sounding titles, are cried up as luminaries of genius——luminaries, indeed, they are—and so is a farthing candle at *midnight*.

I was led into these reflections by hearing my name taken in vain and my title most severely handled by some gay, young sparks, who were making themselves very merry a few evenings ago at my expence over a bottle of red port, from which they seemed to have imbibed unusual draughts of wit and good humour. Whatever curiosity may be excited by the Whispers, whatever attention may be paid to the Hints and Speculations of Gabriel Silvertongue, he will always feel himself gratified with the reflection that, he has made no pompous promises in his title-page, nor arrogated to himself any dictatorial authority in the character which he has

B

assumed.

assumed.—Liberty of speech is claimed as one of the birth-rights of Britons—liberty of whispering is equally their inheritance.—While every body around me speaks aloud I may surely be permitted to whisper ; and, as I evidently do not intend to make a great noise in the world, my small still voice, like the voice of conscience, may hope sometimes to be heard at silent intervals, when more sonorous tongues are hushed to sleep and, like dogs wearied of barking, are laid down by the fire-side.

Having hitherto whispered my way through a noisy, bustling, bawling world ; having peeped into business and sported through pleasures, mingled with company and conversed with solitude ; having stolen into public haunts and viewed the domestic recesses of private families ; in a word, having, for the most part, though with some few bitter disappointments, glided down the tide of time like smooth oil on the face of troubled waters, I am now retired to the venerable seat of my ancestors with a full resolution to wear out the calm evening of life amid the well-remembered scenes, where formerly I smiled away the golden age of infancy.

But

But I wish not to be mistaken for a fullen humourist, who has sequestered himself from society in a fit of spleen. It is true I have tasted, in my turn, of the cup of affliction; I have been a stricken deer; but feeling for myself has taught me to feel for others. Though I have met with ingratitude, ingratitude itself has instructed me in the art of true benevolence; and, to the last moment of my life, I hope always to have a mite for the needy and a tear for the distressed. He that imprisons his heart within the walls of his own breast and shuts out all the world beside, he that can spurn at indigence or trample on misfortune, who regards all men as fools because some are foolish, or all as knaves because some are knavish—such a man ought to be a *stranger* upon the face of the earth.

For my own part, though composed of as frail clay as any man, and constitutionally inclined to indulge “a humorous sadness,” I nevertheless frequently unbend the solemnity of my temper to the enjoyment of innocent amusements, and can even relish the pleasures of good wit, good wine and good company

as highly now as in the brightest sunshine of my youth. I am not retired from the world to wrap myself up in myself, but

—————Through the loop holes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel and not feel the croud;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th' unincjur'd ear."

COWPER,

Here, then, I dwell like the little insect that spins its filken nest within the furrowed bark of some majestic oak; there snugly reposing while hurricanes agitate the branches above and scatter the leaves over the plain. And here, where even the thunder that shakes the political hemisphere vibrates only in a whisper, my own whisperings may perhaps be heard with those of the breezes and the busy insects that people the summer air.

Q.

No. III.

No. III.

Thursday, June 11, 1795.

The Whisperer meets with other Whisperers.

WHENEVER, during the course of my life, I have been attacked by any species of indisposition, I have always been sure to hear of many persons who were affected in precisely the same manner. A few years ago I had a rheumatic fever which reduced me so low that I was confined to my bed for several weeks, and it was many months before I was completely recovered. During the period of my convalescence my friends were particularly kind in visiting me; and scarcely any of them neglected to inform me of some acquaintance or other who had suffered, or was then suffering grievously from complaints similar to mine. In short, I began to apprehend that, when I got well again, I should find, at least, one half of my

B 3

neighbours

neighbours and townsmen crippled by this dreadful disorder; but no sooner was I restored to my accustomed degree of health, than to my agreeable surprize, I saw that most persons about me had the free and unconstrained use of their limbs, and the "tales of woe" which had formerly been brought to me in such abundance now seldom vibrated upon my ear. Mankind have certainly a wonderful disposition to the exercise of sympathy, and a no less strong propensity to the classification both of persons and things according to their respective characters, properties and conditions. Place yourself in whatever circumstances you please, and you may depend upon it you will not long find yourself in a novel or peculiar situation. Whatever it may be, thousands have occupied it before, and thousands stand at present in the same predicament.—I have been led to make the above remarks in consequence of what has occurred to me since I assumed the title of "the Whisperer." If the reader will give himself the trouble to look back to my last number, he will find that when I wrote it I little imagined there had been so much whispering in the world as I since find there is. On the contrary

contrary it appeared to me that every body about me spoke in loud and sonorous language; and amid the "busy din of tongues" which every where assailed me I certainly thought that in undertaking to whisper for the public good, while so many are engaged in shouting for their own, I was steering into a channel which, if not perfectly new, was however, little frequented. But scarcely had I announced my name, character and occupation, before I discovered my mistake. The art of whispering, it seems, is thoroughly understood; and the right hand of fellowship has been held out to me by even whole fraternities of whisperers, who all appeared to be confidently persuaded I could have no other intention than to offer myself as candidate for the honour of being united to their respective societies. I have not, however, thought it prudent or even justifiable to join myself to any of them; for they are none of them established, as far as I can learn, upon such principles as meet with my entire concurrence. One of the most numerous of these societies, and into which I have been strongly urged to enter, is one which distinguishes itself by the name of the "Whisperers of

of Character." Upon enquiry I find there is a pun in the very title which they have adopted; and in its proper and true meaning it implies that the characters of others constitute the subject on which their whispering faculties are employed. As I was never very fond of scandal, I have declined the proposals of this Association; notwithstanding I was positively assured that upon my entering into it, I should be made master of numerous pieces of private history which would equally surprize and entertain, and of not a few which would shock and confound me.

Another whispering society, which soon attracted my notice, and seemed to make itself sure of my principal attention, was a society of politicians. The members of this fraternity, deep, shrewd, sagacious men, pride themselves particularly on their early intelligence, and on their intimate knowledge of the hidden springs and unseen powers which direct the movements of the great political machine. These Gentlemen are as well acquainted with the secret views of the Empress of Russia and the House of Austria, as with those of the Cabinet of Berlin, or the French Convention. And they
can

can calculate to as great a nicety the effects to be produced by the operations of a campaign, as the number of whiffs required to evaporate in smoke an hog'shead of tobacco. The proposals of this learned body I modestly declined, alledging my ignorance and inexperience with respect to the weighty concerns of politics.

The next set of whisperers, who seemed to expect me to join their class, consisted of a number of persons, who appeared each to be exalted in his own opinion by the consciousness of being possessed of some important secret, which however I found had generally been imparted in confidence, and under a promise of the most profound silence and concealment, to so many persons that the affair would certainly not have been more generally known had it been published in a newspaper, or proclaimed at Charing-Cross. I saw little prospect of either pleasure or advantage in becoming connected with this association, and therefore have hitherto avoided all communication with its members.

I have been apprized of the existence of several other descriptions of whisperers besides those which I have now mentioned; and may possibly take a future opportunity of introducing my readers to an acquaintance with some of them. Those persons are much mistaken who imagine that whispering is an unfashionable thing. On the contrary I will take upon me to say, from observations which I have lately made, that nothing is more universally practised in the *beau monde*; and I desire that no one will have the presumption henceforth to pretend that a custom, sanctioned by such various and high authority, can be otherwise than perfectly genteel. It is true I have proposed to myself a method of exercising this useful and important art, in some respects, different from most which I have hitherto seen adopted. But having acquired a little of the *esprit du corps* since I have discovered a connexion between myself and so large and respectable a body of contemporaries, I cannot without a marked disapprobation allow my fellow-labourers to be unjustly calumniated. In behalf therefore of the whole race of whisperers, to whatever particular class or denomination

nomination they may belong, all persons are hereby forbidden, on pain of incurring the severest criticism, from mal-treating, ridiculing or censuring any one who may chuse to express himself, upon whatever occasion, in a soft and gentle tone of voice; and all such tones and sounds, are henceforth declared to be perfectly genteel, and infinitely preferable to a coarse, rugged and consequently vulgar articulation.

S.

No. IV.

No. IV.

Thursday, June 18, 1795.

*A Pair of Portraits of Sir Solomon Sombre and
Deſtor Alexander Lapwing.*

IN my first number I hinted to my Readers that I was a number of a certain honourable ſociety, before whom the communications of my correſpondents were to be brought to receive judgment; and this auguſt *Board of Criticiſm*, as I then ſtyled it, were to be inveſted with the power of life and death over all ſuch performances as might from time to time, be ſent for publication to the *Whiſperer*. In this paper I intend to introduce to the acquaintance of my readers two very diſtinguiſhed perſonages, members of this worſhipful Bench of Cenſors, who are beſide my intimate friends, and have promiſed to be occaſionally my fellow labourers in the field of Whiſpering.

The

The first, in point of political rank and personal dignity, is Sir Solomon Sombre, an antient Baronet, who may perhaps be esteemed one of the most eccentric characters the world ever produced. In his youth, according to his own account, he was as lively and polite a rake as any young gentleman of the present day: he drank with deep devotion, swore with a most fashionable grace, could lose a few cool hundreds at a card-table with more composure than a philosopher could eat a supper of herbs, or win as many thousands at Newmarket without relaxing a muscle of his countenance. He fought two duels before he was eighteen; ran his antagonist most honourably through the body, in the first, who nevertheless recovered; and, in the second, received a bullet in his thigh, which he will carry with him to his grave. In short, young Sir Solomon was the very pink of fashion and weather cock of folly; he haunted taverns, coffeehouses and brothels, kicked constables, knocked down watchmen, bilked the ladies of the town, and was, in every respect, a most accomplished Man of the World.

C

But

But this brilliant meteor was suddenly eclipsed by the intervention of a very singular circumstance. During the rebellion in the last reign, in a large circle of his jovial companions, the intoxicated Baronet toasted the unfortunate Chevalier de St. George, who was at that time on his march toward the capital. Tho' the toast was evidently given only in a frolic it had nearly cost him his life: information was laid against him by some of his associates; he was arrested and committed to Newgate upon suspicion of High Treason. His father being then dead, and the Baronet himself not yet being of age, his mother, who resided at Bath, immediately hastened to London, and, partly by her own exertions and the influence of his guardians, but principally by the magic virtue of almighty gold, procured his enlargement.

The fullen and inspiring gloom of a prison had already awakened reflection in the breast of Sir Solomon; and, to his inexpressible astonishment, he there first discovered that he had a thinking mind and a conscience. The agonies

nies of remorse and repentance which tortured him during his confinement, were inexpressibly aggravated when he recovered his liberty, and, instead of being permitted to weep forth his gratitude upon the bosom of his mother, he was sentenced to be a perpetual exile from her presence. Sir Solomon, overwhelmed with grief and despondency at the unrelenting severity of his mother, and the base treachery of his former companions, quitted the kingdom, by permission of his guardians, and wandered over the greatest part of Europe till he arrived at age. He then returned to England; but his mother still continuing inexorable, he retired to the antient manor-house on his estate, in this neighbourhood, where he has, for the most part, resided ever since. The severe interdict, which banished the son from the mother, was never taken off till a few days before her death, which happened about nine years afterwards, when she sent for him to receive her pardon and her blessing.

The mode of life which Sir Solomon has led since his recess, his unhappy marriage, his romantic

mantic improvements in his park, pleasure-grounds and gardens, with other interesting incidents, I may probably have occasion to enlarge upon in future papers ; my present business is to sketch a portrait of Sir Solomon as he is now.

The Baronet is in the sixty-eighth year of his age : in person very tall, and so slender that he appears to be a man, like the moon at certain times, only in the first quarter. His forehead, nose and chin are nearly of equal longitude, tho' his whole physiognomy is so narrow that they scarce have any latitude at all. There is something peculiarly picturesque in the venerable whiteness and striking elevation of his brows, beneath whose hoary umbrage his mild eyes, twinkling through the twilight of his complexion, shed a soft and pensive lustre over the furrows of his cheeks.—The crown of his head is bald, polished like a mirror and encircled with a thin chaplet of hair, perfectly white and crisped like figured frost on a pane of glass. Sir Solomon always appears in a grave dress of black velvet, of a most unfashionable cut, with very full ruffles at his hands
and

and bosom, an immense cocked hat, and diminutive silver buckles barely visible on his long feet. Having been maimed in a duel, as already mentioned, he is indebted for half his support through the world to a wooden crutch: and though he has leared more than half a century on this timber friend, it has never once betrayed his confidence nor given him the slip. The grateful Baronet, in his turn, is most tenderly attached to this faithful help-mate; which, having journeyed with him thus far through life, will, in due time, be rewarded for its long services by a comfortable place in the same tomb with its master.

Such is the grotesque figure of my friend Sir Solomon Sombre; nor is this singular form animated by a soul less eccentric. Those uncomfortable habits of despondency, wherein he has continually indulged himself, and which, from time to time, have been aggravated by repeated disappointments, are now so woven into his nature that what he voluntarily acquired he never has had power or courage to resign. His face in general wears an aspect of mysterious solemnity; he shrinks from the

society of men, except that of a few choice friends; and seems rather to haunt than to live in his own house. His imagination is warm and romantic: at certain periods there is an enthusiasm in his very look; he moves, he stands, he speaks in a manner peculiar to himself: fairies, witches, genii are all familiar spirits with him: his conversation is in heaven among the stars; and his soul may be said to reside oftener and more in any one of the other planets than in that which his body inhabits. He is upon terms of the kindest intimacy with the moon; and, indeed, her lunar majesty has become so enamoured of him that she has taken upon herself the housekeeping of his head, and rules the Baronet's brain as regularly as she governs the tide.—The sun is his prime-minister, whom he consults on every important occasion; and an excellent counsellor he is, though he will never give his advice except in fair weather. Sir Solomon loves the pleiades as tenderly as if they were his daughters; the faces of Orion and Bootes are more familiar to him than those of his butler and postilion; the Bear, the Bull and all the monsters that people the

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the skies are as tame as lambs in his company : the fields of aether are more frequented by him than his park ; and he oftener bowls in the chariot of imagination along the galaxy than upon his own coach-road. The truth is that Sir Solomon, for want of better employment in his solitude, and labouring under both physical and metaphysical infirmities, has, for many years past, cultivated with the most painful attention the study of occult philosophy : and I doubt not but my sagacious friend is as profoundly skilled in all the mysterious sciences as any of the right learned and right reverend astrologers, soothsayers, magicians, Chaldeans and dream-interpreters of the Court of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. But with all his chimerical opinions and hypochondriachal weaknesses, the Baronet possesses an exquisite sensibility of soul, a tenderness of heart and an amiable, though whimsical, simplicity of manners, that irresistably win the affections of all who converse with him : indeed his friends scarcely know whether to admire or to pity him most.

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The next member of our critical Club is the Rev. Doctor Lapwing, Rector of the parish of N——, and the bosom friend and companion of Sir Solomon. In person, humour and disposition they are the very antipodes of each other; but there are not in nature two men, of similar or contradictory tempers, more uniformly and sincerely attached than this odd pair of friends. The Doctor is a little, brisk man; but unfortunately carries his shoulders so high that he has frequently the mortification to hear himself saluted, “my Lord!” behind his back. This very circumstance has made him both a wit and a humourist; and, as he gravely observed to me the other day, so many jokes had been laid upon his back that he was compelled to turn wit in his own defence; and this he was very well enabled to do by the ample stock of jests which he always carried on his shoulders. To balance this burthen nature has graced him with an equal rotundity of belly before, which, mounted on a pair of handsome legs, forms a very respectable front view of the Doctor’s person. His face appears as broad and almost as bright as the full moon; when he speaks every muscle is alive and in action; when

when he smiles a sunshine of good humour beams over his whole countenance; sweetness and severity, fire and vivacity are happily mingled in his keen black eye, every glance of which seems to penetrate the breast and probe the heart of the person on whom he looks.

The Doctor is a man of strong sense and extensive erudition: indeed he is a regular or an honorary member of almost every literary, philosophical and agricultural society in Europe and America: he often merrily observes that he can boast of as many titles as any monarch in the world, and familiarly writes his name thus—*“Alexander Lapwing, A. B. C. &c.”*—thereby intimating that nothing less than the alphabet itself can supply the initials of his diplomatic dignities. The Doctor is particularly cleanly in his person and neat in his apparel: he is more anxious about the dressing of his perriwig than of his dinner, and consults his glass on a Sabbath-day at least as often as his text.

When I once rallied him upon this little point of vanity, “Oh!” said the Doctor, turning over the leaves of a Bible, “you see
I have

I have all the Scriptures at my *finger ends*; but the characters of my face are like those of a worn-out antique inscription, the more I study them the more unintelligible they appear."

"So then," said I, "as often as you peruse your face you still can make nothing of it?"

"Nothing *but* a face!" quoth the Doctor, very emphatically; "and the proudest beauty in the land can make no more of her's; except, indeed," added he, lowering his voice, "she turn one of nature's originals into a picture."

I will only observe, at present, that, facetious as Doctor Lapwing is in conversation, he is a worthy and respectable spiritual pastor, and never attempts to be witty in the pulpit.

Q.

No. V.

No. V.

Thursday, June 25, 1795:

*Characteristic Sketches of two more of the Whis-
perer's Companions.*

NOTHING in nature is more diversified than the human character. The features and complexion of the mind, like those of the face, vary in every person living. As men of the sublimest genius and most cultivated talents are frequently deficient in the necessary knowledge of the most common concerns of life, so the rudest and most ignorant individuals of the species often excel in some trifling acquirements, wherein they have daily opportunity of signalizing their skill and displaying their ingenuity. When I was at school, I remember, the most impenetrable dunce among us all was the most expert swimmer ; he could climb a tree with the nimbleness of a squirrel,
and

and had a wonderful knack at finding birds' nests; while our first paragon of literature, who made mere mouthfulls of the dead and living languages, could never learn to whip a top or button his waistcoat straight. Their fortune in life has been no less distinguished than their accomplishments: the former, the son of an alderman, hopped up from one twig of preferment to another, till now he has nearly arrived at the top of the tree; and though his gradual elevation has not much tended to diminish the natural giddiness of his brain, he is in a fair way of building his nest as high as any court-rook in the neighbourhood of St. James's. The latter has been on the road to a bishoprick these five and twenty years, but he moves along with such episcopal solemnity towards it that he has never yet been able to advance beyond a curacy; and, unless he mend both his pace and his manners, I am of opinion that he will be summoned to attend a certain funereal procession before he reach the gates of the vicarage in the next parish.

Nature seems to have humbled her eldest and her favourite sons with failings, and endowed her youngest and her weakest children with accomplishments, lest the former elated with pride should imagine themselves more, and the latter debased with meanness think themselves less than men, and both forget that they are brethren. He, therefore, that can measure heaven with a span of imagination ought not to be lifted up in his own conceit, lest, upon examination, it should be found that he cannot carve a chicken: and you, my honest friend, who are a stranger to every letter in the alphabet, be not dejected, for you can, perhaps, make a mousetrap! Every man's peculiarities are the characteristics whereby he is individually distinguished from all others of the species; and he who has no peculiarities can have no character: nature intended every man to make a *figure* in the world, though her rival art, I fear, has converted many into *cyphers*. But I check the impatience of my pen, lest it should overrun this whole essay without dropping a syllable on the subject for which I assumed it. Many persons, I know, will be inclined to laugh

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at the pictures I have already drawn of my friends Sir Solomon Sombre and Doctor Lapwing; and I doubt not but the other worthy members of our club, whom I shall recommend to the public in this paper, will be equally honoured with their farcasms: but I will remind the wags that mirth, 'like charity, should begin at home, and till a man has laughed all his own follies out of countenance the infirmities of his neighbour ought to be held sacred.

Mr. Jonathan Starlight is one of the most ingenious speculative philosophers of the age. There is nothing remarkable in the external appearance of this gentleman, except a large brown mole upon his cheek; and this, according to Doctor Lapwing, is one of the insignia whereby the nobility of nature are honourably distinguished from the vulgar of mankind, in the same manner as a duke is known by his coronet and a knight by his star and garter. Not having room, at present, to expatiate upon the genius, learning and sentiments of our illustrious philosopher, I shall only mention a few of his fugitive opinions as samples of the rest:

rest: sincerely hoping that no man will have the hardihood to deny the truth of any thing which he cannot positively prove to be false.

Jonathan believes in the omnipotence of truth and the perfectability of human nature. According to this pleasing and romantic system an age will arrive, when man shall no longer wander in error or stray in uncertainty; when his faculties will be so enlarged, and his soul so expanded, that he can comprehend all the secrets of nature and dive into all the mysteries of art. By his skill in physic and chymistry he will be enabled to render his body immortal and renew his youth as regularly as it wears away; while his mind tempered with philosophy and his memory fed with inexhaustible knowledge shall progressively improve and never be impaired. All the world will become one nation and all mankind one family: all laws and government will be abolished, for all men will be virtuous, wise and happy: churches will be converted into dwellings, for every man will worship God in the temple of his own heart. By the discovery of a perpetual mobile mechanics will be carried to perfection: so that
the

the farmer shall enjoy his pipe and his glass in his own parlour, while, at a motion of his hand or foot, his plough and harrow shall march into the field and perform their duty in the most expeditious manner: the scythe, the tickle, the rake and the fork shall reap the harvest and make hay without hands, which the self-moving waggon shall bring home without horses. By means of balloons swelled with a fluid, not yet discovered, infinitely more subtle than that which, according to some philosophers, fills all space, and, by its mysterious undulations, moves, attracts and repels the atoms composing the universe, communication will be opened with the sun, moon and stars; and posts and stages established between all the worlds in the creation. But nothing in our philosopher's whole scheme pleases me more than his astonishing improvements on the telescope and telegraph: for he contends that such a flood of light will be poured upon the science of optics, and the eyes of men in that happy age will be so miraculously illuminated that two friends, with each a perspective glass and a pocket telegraph, may converse together from one end of the universe to the other as familiarly as if they

they were seated together by the fire-side.— Extravagant as these opinions may appear to this unbelieving age, our philosopher supports them with admirable eloquence, skill and ingenuity; nor can all the raillery of Doctor Lapwing himself shake my friend's faith in his own system. The reader will be less surprised at this gentleman's eccentricities, when I inform him that Jonathan is not only a philosopher but a *poet* also.

Captain O'Shannon, another member of our club, has been cast in a different mould. He is a venerable superannuated officer, worn down to the very bone in the service of his country; having lost an ear in the West Indies, an eye on the coast of Coromandel, deposited an arm in Germany and buried a leg in North America: and he has been otherwise so roughly handled in the wars that he is at this day little more than half of himself. He is a native of Ireland; and was originally found, like Moses, sleeping in a basket among the bullrushes on the banks of the Shannon, from which river he takes his name: indeed, I have heard him say, in the bold figurative language of his country, that he

believes he was never born at all, at all; for no christian parents could ever have found in their hearts to expose, in so cruel a manner, a poor innocent babe, who had never done them any harm in its life.—He was adopted by the gentleman on whose estate he first landed in this world, and educated at his expence with his own son. Honest Patrick was an hero from his cradle, and the earliest incident of his childhood that he can recollect, is, that he ran away from his kind fosterparent to follow a recruiting party of soldiers, by whom he was nevertheless conducted home again, though fore against his will. At school his pocket money was regularly expended on swords and guns, both of wood and gingerbread: and he once exchanged his whole library, consisting of a gilt primer, spelling book and testament for a fixpenny drum; but his tutor thinking he had made an hard bargain, presented him with an handsome horse whipping to make him amends for it. His patron purchased a pair of colours for him as soon as he could carry them; but dying soon after he left Patrick a considerable legacy, out of which the young hero

hero bought a captain's commission, and distinguished himself in several battles on the continent while a very young man. After having shed his blood in every quarter of the globe, he is now retired upon a pension to spend the remainder of his life in telling the story of the past: indeed, he is a most entertaining companion; for, though bending beneath a load of years and infirmities, and one half of him already in the grave, he can, to this day, storm cities, carry entrenchments, rout armies and toil through all the fatigues of a campaign, in his elbow chair, with as much spirit and fire as formerly animated him in the field of battle itself.—He is a brave, blunt, generous old soldier; and though nursed in the school of blood, no human breast encloses a more benevolent heart: he is universally beloved and respected in this neighbourhood.

In some future paper I may probably introduce the names and characters of the other ingenious gentlemen who form the little circle of my friends.

Q.

No. VI.

No. VI.

Thursday, July 2, 1795.

A domestic Picture, sacred to the Ladies

“**Y**OU have whispered five times, Mr. Silvertongue!” writes a fair correspondent, “and never yet addressed a syllable to the ladies: did you never whisper soft things in a lady’s ear?”

This gentle reproof made me blush in my closet, as I perused Lavinia’s letter; and the sly insinuation, conveyed in her question, redoubled my confusion. The tenderest strings of my heart were touched; they vibrated like the chords of the Æolian lyre, when brushed by the light pinions of the evening breeze. A pensive train of fluttering sensations succeeded. I remembered the days of my youth; I remembered the season of love: I wept at the recollection

recollection of past pleasures; I wept because those pleasures will never return. Dear departed hours ! too happy long to last ; too delightful ever to be forgotten ! All nature smiled, for I was willing to be pleased : every grove melted with music, for my soul was tuned to harmony : the fountains flowed with nectar, the flowers breathed incense, and every breeze whispered of love. As the boy pursues the rainbow over the meadows, so does my fond imagination pant after the fairy visions of former times : but the rainbow vanishes into air, and the fairy visions of former times fade from the memory of Gabriel Silvertongue——

——Hush !——another syllable might betray the secret which has been locked up in my bosom these fifteen years ; and which shall never be entrusted elsewhere till I descend with it into the tomb, that faithful repository, where the deep secrets of all hearts repose in eternal silence with the ashes of their owners.

Lavinia's letter, however, afforded me such a favourite theme for pleasing speculation,
that

that I immediately took up my pen, and might probably have produced a very amusing paper for the ladies; but I was suddenly interrupted by the following note from Doctor Lapwing, with whom I had engaged to spend the evening.

DEAR GABRIEL,

MY VINE and OLIVE-BRANCHES, seated round my tea table, present their compliments, and, if you are not too piously employed in *whispering away your neighbours' characters*, request your immediate attendance at the parsonage. Come, for all things are ready.

Your's sincerely,

ALEX. LAPWING.

I rose instantly and, putting myself in the best humour I could, went to my friend's house. The Doctor resides in a warm substantial mansion, whose hoary walls are so luxuriantly clothed with vines and ivy, that you can scarce distinguish a stone through the green foliage. The Doctor, therefore, compares his
house.

house to his head, each requiring a wig to cover its baldness and add to its dignity. Before the door is a smooth-haven grass-plat, with gravel walks, and below a well-trimmed garden : behind, the house is sheltered by an extensive orchard ; on the east side is a flourishing shrubbery of evergreens, and on the west lies the church-yard ; which, as usual, is by far the most *populous* and most *peaceable* part of our village.

When I entered the Doctor's parlour I found, beside his own family, consisting of his wife, two daughters and a son about ten years of age, my friends Sir Solomon Sombre, Mr. Jonathan Starlight, Captain O'Shannon and Valentine Vowell, Esq. a young barrister of sprightly talents, nimble tongue, and considerable legal importance in his looks, who is also a member of our club. Doctor Lapwing rose, and leading me to a chair, " Sit down, Mr. Whisperer !" said he, " you have an excellent memory, for you can *remember* when you are *reminded*."

“ I confess, Doctor ! my memory is of the court breed—rather short !”

“ Aye, short of nothing !—except a little brushing up now and then.”

I was silent : the ladies smiled and Captain O'Shannon laughed outright.

I love to see ladies at a tea table ; for I think the gentle sex are never more charming than when they are employed in those pretty domestic offices, which, though trivial in themselves, assume a certain consequence in the hands of the fair. The elegant equipage of the tea table, the glittering china, estimable even for its brittleness, frail emblem of beauty ! the aromatic flavour of this favourite beverage, the smiling, animated looks and gay conversation of a select groupe of female friends, all conspire to render a seat at the tea table more desirable, in my opinion, than even a seat at his Majesty's privy council table.

My fair readers, I know, will be anxious for some further account of the persons and accomplishments

accomplishments of the Doctor's spouse and her two daughters: I wish it were in my power, by any colouring of description, to do complete justice to these amiable ladies, and render them as agreeable in the eyes of my fair friends as they appear to myself.

Mrs. Lapwing, though turned on the venerable side of forty, is still a fine woman; she is a beauty on the wane, whose declining lustre glows, indeed, with less brilliancy, yet still retains all that ineffable sweetness, which charmed her admirers in the morning of youth. She has, notwithstanding, so much of the mother in her look that you cannot for a moment think of her in any other character. She is just the reverse of those communicative rambles of her sex, who are never so *little at home* as when they *are at home*; her happy family circle is the sphere in which she moves with peculiar complacency: her children are her jewels, and her domestic œconomy is her delight. All the rooms in her house are so neatly furnished, so clean and so comfortable, that I always fancy I breathe a purer air under her roof than in any other house which I am accustomed

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to

to visit. I must here give Doctor Lapwing also his due, for he is a most indulgent husband, and truly deserving of so tender and excellent a wife.

Annabella, their eldest daughter, is now in her nineteenth year: she is a tall and elegant figure, with a countenance like her mother's, full of sweetness and intelligence. Annabella dresses with exquisite taste; she is the queen of the fashion in our parish; all the modes and colours of ribbands, silks, laces, ruffles, with the whole world of female ornaments, are governed by her sovereign choice: and there are few young ladies in our neighbourhood who do not envy the glossy brown tresses of her hair, which she suffers to flow in beautiful profusion on her neck and shoulders. She dances with inimitable grace, sings charmingly, and plays with admirable skill on the piano forte and guittar. Counsellor Vowell swears she is an angel; but Annabella says she will not believe him. "My sweet Annabella," said the Barrister yesterday morning to her, "if you will neither take my word nor my oath, take my *hand*!" Annabella blushed an answer;

answer; and the brisk young Lawyer has carried his head as high as any married man ever since.

Charlotte, her sister, is about two years younger. Though she does not appear at first view so captivating a figure as Annabella, yet I never in my life met with a more interesting little creature. With a diminutive person, but very pretty features, she possesses all the vivacity of her father, and all the modesty of her mother. She wins insensibly upon the affections of all her companions, and has the delicate art of insinuating herself into every body's favour. All the parish admire Annabella, but they love Charlotte.

I drop the pencil and resume the pen to relate our tea-table conversation, which was of so curious and important a nature that—I shall give it in my next paper.

V.

No. VII.

No. VII.

Thursday, July 9, 1795.

Tea-Table Talk.

“**SILENCE,**” exclaimed Doctor Lapwing, after a long pause during which we had drank a dish of tea round, “Silence is such a phenomenon in our family, that I cannot conceive the meaning of it at present.

“Can *any thing* be meant where *nothing* is said?” cried the young Barrister with great vivacity.

“Yes, truly!” retorted the Doctor with a most significant glance, “for where a *great deal* is said, there is seldom *any meaning* in it.”

The mercury in the Counsellor’s face fell ten degrees, and his whole animal spirits underwent

derwent such a fermentation, that I thought all the blood in his body appeared boiling in his cheeks.

A solemn pause ensued, which was broken by Captain O'Shannon, who could not forbear exclaiming "By Jafus, I never *heard* such a silence in my life!"

"Captain!" said Doctor Lapwing, "my wife and daughters have sent their tongues a visiting, that they themselves might receive their own visitors with the more solemnity and respect."

"My Dear!" cried Mrs. Lapwing, you "know we love rather to hear than to speak."

"Right!" rejoined the Doctor, "Ladies are so fond of hearing, that they talk eternally only to *hear themselves*."

"Papa!" said Annabella, who could not forbear sympathising with the uneasy sensations of Counsellor Vowell "you are always so severe, one can neither speak nor hold one's tongue, but you find fault."

"It -

"It would be surprising indeed, Nancy!" replied her father, "if I found a fault and you did not find an excuse for it."

"That's a proof, Papa, that we never do any thing *inexcusable*," cried little Charlotte with exquisite *naivette*.

An universal smile illumined the whole tea table: the merry Doctor himself, charmed with the sprightly repartee, looked with tender transport on his daughter, and exclaimed, with enthusiastic emphasis, "Charlotte! you are a sweet girl: but believe me, child, your wit, at least, is *inexcusable*!"

The young lady coloured very deeply, and, as she hid her lovely face behind her fan, whispered, just audibly, "One must either be a wit or the cause of wit in my father's company."

"Well, Mr. Silvertongue," said Doctor Lapwing, suddenly turning towards me and changing the topic of conversation, "you have whispered away to some tune indeed of late: pray,
Sir,

Sir, do you know the meaning of the word Scandal?"

"Doctor Lapwing cannot ask that question for the sake of information: otherwise he would have put it to his dictionary rather than to his friend!"

"Pray, Sir, do you know the meaning of the word Scandal?"

"I beseech you to explain yourself, Doctor! surely you do not suppose I have been whispering scandal."

"'Tis a strong presumption of guilt when a culprit pleads "Not Guilty" before he is arraigned."

"You speak in hieroglyphics, Doctor! and it would require all the learning of the Egyptians to understand you."

"None are so dull as those who will not comprehend. Look round the table, Sir! Do you know these gentlemen? This antient personage

personage is Sir Solomon Sombre, a Baronet of his Majesty's kingdom of Great Britain; he is a meek, good natured man, who would not hurt a gnat: this grave mortal is Mr. Jonathan Starlight, a philosopher, equally distinguished for the sublimity of his brain and the profundity of his heart; he intends to live for ever, that is, as long as he can: that honest man in ruins, on your left hand, is the wreck of Captain O'Shannon: and here, in this elbow chair, sits the body of Alexander Lapwing, parson of this parish! Do you recollect these names, these faces, these persons?"

"Perfectly well, Doctor, they are all my *bosom* friends!"

"So they *were*, but *now* you have *unbosomed* them to all the world!"

"In a whisper!"

"Yes, Sir, scandal is circulated by whispering: and whispering begets talking, and talking begets shouting, and shouting begets hard words, and hard words beget hard knocks,
and

and hard knocks beget the whole family of broken heads, black eyes and bloody noses. Thus wags the world !”

“ I hope I have said nothing but the truth !”

“ Truth ! aye, Sir, that’s the mischief on’t ! Scandals, like libels, are the most scandalous when they are the most true.”

“ Arrah, my jewel ! and so they are, Mr. Silvertongue !” cried Captain O’Shannon : “ I swear and declare, upon the oath of a soldier and the honour of a gentleman, when I saw myself in print, though you had pictured me to a hair, half man and half timber ! I did not know whether I was myself or a scarecrow : but,” continued he, marshalling all the furrows of his face into one tremendous frown, “ there has been a day when Captain O’Shannon would have made the moon shine through the soul and body of the man who dared to expose him in print ! Print ! By the ghost of my grandmother ! St. Patrick rest her blessed bones ! if you was not Master Silvertongue, and if you was not as short-sighted as a beetle, and if you was not as lame

of the gout as a sucking duck without either father or mother, you should soon see what this withered arm is still capable of performing. Here; honey, feel ye ! There my old boy !”

So saying the veteran grasped my hand and shook it with such herculean cordiality, that, when he quitted his hold, it fell as powerless upon my knee as if it had been stunned by touching a torpedo.

“ Now, Master Gabriel Silvertongue ; now we shall agree : by the faith of O’Shannon I would not have an enemy among my friends for all the goats on the mountains of Mourn !” exclaimed the son of Mars, saluting me with a thunder-clap on the shoulder.

I shrunk from the weight of this additional obligation, and tears (not of gratitude) sprung into my eyes.

“ Really, Captain ! you have shaken the Whisperer till he is ready to roar !” cried Doctor Lapwing.

“ Marty,

“Marry, Doctor! and he’ll ne’er bethe better for it,” answered O’Shannon.

“You ought not to have been angry, Captain! I think Mr. Silvertongue has done you complete justice in his delineation of your character:” said Sir Solomon Sombre in his mild manner.

“Death and judgment! Sir Solomon! hark, Sir! if Master Silvertongue—there he sits—had said only a million times as much of me as he has done of you, his goose quill might have whistled to save its master’s bacon from the jaws of his sword!” Thus thundered the Captain, suddenly drawing and brandishing his flaming blade across the table to the inexpressible terror of the ladies. Mrs. Lapwing and Annabella flew out of the room, shrieking: while the magnanimous Counsellor and Philosopher both leaped as nimbly as two cats upon a large dining table, and stood there trembling, each holding a chair with both his hands as a defensive weapon, in case the Hibernian should make an attack upon their persons. Doctor Lapwing and I
removed

removed our chairs to a convenient distance, and indulged our laughter very freely: but Sir Solomon Sombre remained perfectly serene and composed. Charlotte, however, who sat by the Captain, arrested his impetuous arm with both her hands, and O'Shannon, in a moment, melted from a tyger into a lamb.

“ Give me that pretty, glittering plaything !” said the amiable girl with a most bewitching smile.

“ And what would my little jewel do with it ?” said the Captain, while his grim features settled into a look full of tenderness.

“ I’ll give it to my brother Benjamin: it will make such a fine hobby horse for him !” answered Charlotte.

“ Charming innocence !” returned the Captain, “ this sword has been my hobby horse ever since I was of your age, Charlotte ! and a mischievous one it is : why, if Benjamin were to take a single ride upon it across the parlour it would

would slice him in two, as you might cut an apple."

"I thought as much," rejoined Charlotte, with an arch simper; "but how could Captain O'Shannon bring such a naughty hobby horse here to play his vicious pranks among us, who are all friends?"

The dusky visage of the hoary veteran was suddenly suffused with an ardent blush: he was abashed, he was silent; and his vindictive sword sneaked back into its scabbard again.

When harmony was again established at the table, and Mrs. Lapwing, Annabella, Counsellor Vowell and Philosopher Starlight had resumed their seats, the Doctor asked me whether, when I assumed the character of Whisperer General, I had not taken an oath of allegiance to the ladies.

"Most certainly, Doctor!" I answered; "I am so determined an enemy to *Salique* laws that I have resolved to assert the sovereignty of the sex, the supremacy of beauty, and the

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infallibility

infallibility of the ladies, whenever my duty shall require or opportunity offer."

"Fie, Mr. Silvertongue!" exclaimed Charlotte, "and can you condescend to flatter?"

"No, Charlotte; but I will speak of you as you are: praise you when I can, censure when I cannot help: regulate your pleasures, smile at your foibles and admire your accomplishments. Such shall be occasionally the pleasing task of the Whisperer."

Here the ladies withdrew: and the conversation turned upon graver subjects; but I do not feel myself inclined at present to communicate the burthen of our discourse.

V.

No. VIII.

No. VIII.

Thursday, July 16, 1795.

A Morning Ramble.

RISING early, a few mornings ago, I walked out into the fields to enjoy the cool delight that breathes over the world in the dawning hours of day. The sun, just peeping above the horizon, shot his level rays along the brightening landscape and tipt the shadowy hills with golden light: while the duff mists, floating down the vallies, glittered with his beams, and the warm blushes of morning, that crimsoned the East, sweetly and insensibly melted away in the splendor of his smiles. The freshness of the breeze, charged with the incense of innumerable flowers; the twinkling dew drops, pendent from every leaf and spangling every blade of grass; the groves awakening from the silence of night, and bursting in

universal song ; all conspired to swell my bosom and elevate my mind. My soul rose upon the glad wings of the lark, and bore its grateful orisons to the gate of heaven : then mingling with the clouds, it looked down from its sublime elevation upon the world below !

The prospect was magnificent. A range of majestic mountains, on the one hand, rose to meet the morning sun ; their sides were clothed with forests, waving in all the green luxuriance of foliage : at their feet, reposing in the shade and watered by a river, lay a fertile valley stretching immense, and unperceivedly widening into a plain, over which the eye wandered till it lost itself in the clear blue sky. On the other hand, the country exhibited a beautiful scene of culture and population : the face of the land was varied with gentle hills, hamlets surrounded with meadows, farm-houses smoking among gardens, and churches embosomed in trees ; while far away towards the north east lay, wrapt in sleep and vapours, the town of S—, dimly discovered, like a flaw in the landscape, by the pinnacles of its steeples glittering in the light. In the country Industry

was

was just opening his heavy eyes, and Labour rising slowly from his hard bed: the cattle were shaking off their slumbers and beginning to spread over the pastures; while the flocks, pouring in tumultuous transport from the neighbouring folds, whitened the vallies, and chequered the green commons.

Ravished with the beauty and animation of the scene, my heart rose to my lips, and I could not forbear, as I sauntered along, soliloquizing with myself thus.

“ Is this the world of which thousands are weary, of which millions complain, with which none are perfectly satisfied? Was this blooming paradise, planted by the hand that scattered the stars over the immensity of heaven, lighted by yon sun, a beam of his ineffable glory! carpeted with flowers, sheltered with mountains, fertilized by rivers, glowing on every side with a thousand captivating graces,—was this paradise formed to be the habitation of angels, or the prison of miserable beings? Where, now are the cares that torment, the vexations that harass, and the mis-

fortunes that render the load of human life intolerable? Do thy slumber like wild beasts, in the dens of the forests? Are they hidden, like hords of banditti in the caverns of the mountains? Or, snake like, do they lurk among the flowers of the field? I see them not, though mine eye sweeps with a glance over heaven and earth: I feel them not, though, at this moment, my soul is exquisitely alive to every tender sensation! Where, then, do they dwell?—

In the heart of man!—

Yes! he is the father of his own calamities: all the pangs that he feels, all the sufferings he endures, all the evils that distress him, are the offspring of his follies or the children of his vices! His bosom is the dark contagious nest, where this generation of vipers breeds; he feeds them with his blood and they prey upon his vitals! God created the world fair and good, and his creatures innocent and happy: but man has rebelled against his maker; he has converted his blessings into curses, his beauty
into

into deformity, his happiness into punishment: and yet he presumes to arraign the justice of his Creator; he taxes Omnipotence with weakness, Omniscience with ignorance; he charges infinite Goodness with partiality and eternal Providence with neglect! God has spread his table for the whole universe, and invited all nature to sit down and partake of the feast, which his bounty has prepared. Man only, murmuring, repining man, turns discontented from the board, to feed upon vanity, and riot on his lusts: he only, of all the families that people the world, is miserable, though invested by his maker with the sovereignty over the rest!"

Ruminating in this manner I arrived unexpectedly at the door of a cottage. It was prettily situated on the skirt of a wide moor, overgrown with purple heath and yellow broom: behind it were the fields I have passed through: on one side was a garden, where weeds and herbs and flowers grew together in gaily wild confusion; before it was a green descent, on which some geese with their families were busily

busily feeding; the common resounded with the bleating of sheep, and the neighbouring hedges melted with the music of birds. The cottage was neatly built of stone; the front mantled with honeysuckles and wild rose trees in full bloom, breathing the most delicious fragrance; the thatched roof was quite covered with deep green moss. There was such a romantic air of arcadian simplicity and rural beauty about the place, that I was struck with pleasing surprize the moment my eye caught the scene.

“ Surely (said I, pausing to take a full view of the cottage) this is the abode of contentment!—Here dwell innocence and happiness!”

“ A tear of transport startled my eye and dimmed the prospect. My feelings were wound up to the pitch of enthusiasm. I felt an irresistible emotion to enter it. I hesitated a moment—looked round—’twas heaven on earth!—With trembling, hasty hand I opened the door—back I recoiled, smit with unutterable

terable horror!—I stood petrified in stiff amazement, one foot within the threshold, one hand grasping the latch.—Mysterious providence ! oh ! what a spectacle !”

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No. IX.

No. IX.

Thursday, July 23, 1795.

The Cottage.

READER!! gentle reader! if thou hast an eye to weep, or an heart to feel, pause one moment, and view the melancholy scene within!

Stretched upon a miserable straw mattress, in all the lingering agonies of a slow consuming fever, lay the master of the house, covered only with the tattered remnants of cloathes that scarcely wrapt his trembling limbs. Kneeling upon the floor, and bending over him, in an attitude expressive of the most anxious tenderness and unutterable affliction, his weeping wife, the partner of his sorrows, the mother of his children, reached forth her breast to his feeble

feeble lips. My heart felt as if it were bursting within me, when I beheld the sick husband eagerly, yet painfully, drawing a scanty supply of nutrition from that exhausted fountain, vainly opened by nature for the support of an ill-starred infant, which had perished in the porch of life, and, wrapt in a coarse apron, lay a corpse at the feet of its unfortunate father. A mournful, melancholy groupe of small children clung round their parents, and exhibited images of the most extreme wretchedness and dejection. The stillness of death reigned thro' the cottage: I seemed to stand at the mouth of a tomb rather than in the door of an habitation of the living. The walls were naked, the room was utterly destitute of furniture, the shelves were empty, the hearth was cold. Poverty and famine, relentless sister-fiends! had taken up their abode here: even the light of heaven, trembling through the casement, seemed afraid to shine on so much wretchedness, and looked rather like darkness, turned pale with horror, than light.

I stood some time contemplating this dismal spectacle in silence, unperceived by the family,
who

who were too deeply interested in the fate of the father of it to observe the opening of the door. At length one of the children turning round beheld me, and screamed out, as if it had seen a spectre in the dark: whereupon the mother, exceedingly alarmed, turned towards me a pale and piteous face, from whose sunk and languid eyes a few solitary tears strayed down her melancholy cheeks.

My soul fainted at the sight; I staggered to the window, and there sat down, overpowered with sensations of sorrow and sympathy. The poor woman rose in trembling consternation: she threw a glance of frantic solicitude upon her husband, then upon her children, who clung crying around her, and lastly fixed her eyes in speechless agony upon me. The weeping eloquence of her looks, the impassioned language of her sighs, and the whole pathos of her emotions pleaded her cause with such irresistible energy to my heart, that my hand spontaneously ran into my pocket, I felt for my purse—it was not at home: I would have given a world for a guinea at that moment!

Still

Still she opened not her lips; till a deep succession of groans, heaved from the breaking heart of her husband, made her start and wildly exclaim with agonizing emphasis, "God Almighty save us!"

"He will save you—he has saved you!" I cried, scarcely knowing what I said.

Again she darted her eyes, which seemed kindling into lightning upon me, and asked, with pale astonishment, "Are you an angel?" Then, throwing herself prostrate on the floor, she embraced my knees with both her arms, and implored me, in the tenderest accents, with the most distressing looks, with innumerable tears to depart from her miserable cottage. "Let us perish alone!" she exclaimed, starting upon her feet again. "Let us perish alone!" she repeated, shivering with convulsive passion. "O! let us perish alone!" she cried a third time, rushing into the dying arms of her husband: the children redoubled their shrieks, and made the cottage ring with their bitter lamentations.

A cold horror ran tingling through my veins: I was rivetted to the spot; in vain I attempted to rise, to speak, to weep; I felt as if I were crumbling into native dust! By degrees the cries of the children and the wailings of the mother sunk into dead stillness: the silence seemed portentous! Rousing myself from the gloomy torpor which had hitherto oppressed me, I stole to the place, where, on the hard mattrass, lay the expiring father.—His eyes were retired into his head, his whole countenance was sunk and emaciated, but the agony of disease preying upon his vitals, and boiling through his blood, made every muscle quiver as if it were instinct with individual life, and alone the seat of pain.

He trembled exceedingly when I looked down upon him; and, for a moment, the blood flushed his pale cheeks with conscious crimson. “Ah!” said he, in a sinking whisper, scarce audible for the voice of death rattling hoarsely in his throat, “I cannot die and leave you forsaken of all the world, my wife, my children!”

“No,

“ No, don’t die, daddy ; pray don’t die and leave us ! ” cried one of the poor little innocents. The mother snatched up the child in her arms, and kissing it with frantic emotion, exclaimed, “ No, my sweet Billy, he shall not die and leave us—we will go with him : one cottage has contained us living—one grave will hold us dead ! ”

“ Yes, mother,” replied the lisper, “ we’ll all go to heaven together : we’ll follow my little sister there (pointing to the corpse of the dead child.) Sally’s gone to a happy place ; see, mother, how she smiles though she’s dead : poor little Sally ! ” Here the amiable child burst into a passion of crying.

I could no longer contain myself, but was turning round to go to an apothecary, who is my friend, and lives about a mile from the cottage, when the cold damp hand of the sick man caught hold of mine, I shuddered and turned towards him. He lifted his languid eyes upon me with an expression of unutterable affliction, which glanced through my heart like an arrow of fire. A big tear fell from my eye and

trembled on his hand: he looked upon it, and I could perceive his fallow countenance brighten at the sight. "I am dying," said he at length; "these are my children, they will soon—be orphans,—here is my wife, she will soon—be a widow!—Almighty Providence!—save—bless them!"

"Your children shall not want a father, nor your wife a protector," I cried; "but, cheer up my friend, you have many happy days to live."

"No," said the fainting sufferer, "I have lived long enough—this—this moment—makes amends—for all;—my family, I leave you—you have found a friend—Heaven, which takes me away from you—gives you him in—my place. I—am happy."

As he faltered these words in broken, interrupted accents, a lambent flash of joy kindled up his eyes and glanced over his countenance. It was a momentary blaze, like lightning at midnight that breaks through the gloom and instantaneously vanishes into darkness. He

funk,

funk, he sighed, his lips moved, his cheeks were convulsed, he groaned, his last look lingered upon his wife, his eyes broke in blessing his children—he expired !

Forbear, my trembling pen, forbear to trace the bitter scene that followed: let the solitary widow, softening her hard, cold pillow with tears, imagine the agony of the wife: let the desolate orphan, following the ashes of his venerated father to their eternal home, conceive the despair of the children: and oh! wherever the pulse of humanity beats, wherever the throes of compassion are felt, let a sigh rise, let a tear drop to the memory of this unfortunate cottager!

At some future opportunity I will give his history.

No. X.

Thursday, July 30, 1795.

“ This is the way to kill a Wife with kindness.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE following letter from a fair correspondent will occupy the chief part of this Whisper, agreeable to the wishes of Mrs. Quackett, whose good opinion I should not, in the least degree, merit, if I did not feel the most lively sympathy for her singular situation; I say “singular,” for her’s appears to be a new species of distress, and though, I must confess, I have not very sanguine hopes of curing her husband of his prescribing *mania*, yet, agreeable to her wishes—for obedience to the commands of the ladies has been, from time immemorial, an inherent quality in the family of the Silvertongues, I shall, in her

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own words, "whisper" her sorrows to the world, and, at the same time, afford Mr. Quackett an opportunity of seeing his own character in the hands of the "Whisperer" as well as those of his neighbours.

"Dear Mr. Silvertongue,

"YOU cannot think how happy I was when, upon taking up the "IRIS," I found you had engaged part of that paper to exhibit your opinions in the form of essays: now, thinks I to myself, I shall have an opportunity of making my tormenter attend to my complaints; for I think I can persuade Mr. Silvertongue to let me have a little room to whisper my sufferings to the world, and consequently to the ears of Mr. Quackett, in company with matter of more import to the great body of mankind, though not to myself. You must not refuse my request, my dear Whisperer—I shall be miserable if you do: but I will not anticipate evil—I have plenty in possession.—You will comply with my wishes: Mr. Quackett will, of course, read my artless complaints—

plaints—see his own character, and be convinced of the extent of my sufferings.

“ I must first inform you that I have been married about two years, and that Mr. Quackett's character, previous to our connection, was that of a most humane, sensible, worthy man: a character which he still retains; nay, so infatuated are people in his favour, that the complaints I have made of his conduct to my friends have been laughed at by some, procured me serious lectures on my own unreasonableness from others, and all agree that I might be a very happy woman if I pleased, and are sure, from my own account, that he is the most tender husband in the world; though, from my soul, I have reason to wish he were less so,—for God knows, that what with his love for me, and his still greater love of prescribing, I have no comfort in life, and am heartily tired of it!—But to the point. The occasion of my misery is simply this:—Mr. Quackett plumes himself very much upon his medical knowledge; though, by the bye, it is all collected from books. This imaginary skill is accompanied by a propensity to force his medicines

medicines down the throats of all his friends; and poor I, being more immediately within the sphere of his observation and influence, am more particularly doomed to suffer from it. If I eat my breakfast with a good appetite, he is alarmed lest I should have the worms: a dose of rhubarb, calomel or jalep is forced upon me directly. At dinner, owing to the operation of the worm medicine, my appetite is gone: he then trembles lest I am offended at his officiousness, as he knows I take his nauseous draughts against my own opinion. When I have convinced him that my want of appetite is real, I am persecuted with elixir of vitriol and tincture of bark, and am often forced to eat, without inclination for meat, to escape an emetic.

“ If I am, at any time, warm with walking, he construes my appearance into the approach of a fever; and I am condemned to bleed. If I look pale, I am verging to a decline. If I assert, with any warmth, that I have no symptom of the kind, he says that self-security is the surest and most certain sign; and I am almost drenched in asses milk, impregnated

pregnated with hartshorn, till something in my looks induces him to believe that he hath mistaken my disorder. In short, Mr. Silvertongue, in the two years we have lived together Mr. Quackett has discovered in my single frame every disorder to which poor humanity is liable: though, if I had been left to myself, I should not have known that I was in any material degree indisposed; for no woman, of my age (fifty-three) has a better constitution than I have. But what does this avail me? Gallons of heterogeneous mixtures have I swallowed—six times I have been bled—three times blistered—and innumerable times I have been forced to endure the pain arising from electrical shocks. I have been plunged into a cold bath on a frosty morning; and kept, till I fainted, in a vapour bath, the hottest day we have had this summer. I have, in my own person, to please him, experienced the effects of every class of medicines in the apothecary's shop. You can have no conception, my dear Mr. Silvertongue, what quantities of emetics and conserves, boluses, clysters and confections, draughts, mixtures and gargles, juleps, infusions and decoctions, extracts, syrups, tinctures,

tures, elixirs, powders and pills, &c. &c. I have been obliged, by my husband, to poison myself with, to say nothing of the hogsheds of gruel and whey I have drank with them.

“ Have I not occasion to complain? And yet, would you believe it, when I do, I am told it is the nature of disease for the sufferer to be ignorant of its presence! He says he cannot be deceived on this subject; and, sighing, tells me, he is too well assured of my situation! He begs, he entreats me to oblige him by taking the bitter potion which his physical passion has prepared and his mistaken tenderness presents. If I have any disorder, it is one I have no name for; but the symptoms are dispositions too complying with my husband's vagaries. I sacrifice my own opinion, and my own comfort, to the gratification of his passion for pharmacy.

“ You see, Sir, it is impossible to talk him into reason. It is vain to attempt it: he would interrupt me in his old strain. But meeting with my case in this form, he must read to an end; and I hope, and pray heartily
it

it may have its proper effect, for I really cannot long live in the manner I now do.

“ If all I have written should fail of the effect I hope from it, I here, solemnly and deliberately, enter my protest against the whole *Materia Medica*, whether regularly prepared and compounded agreeable to the most modern dispensatories and prescriptions of the colleges of all the doctor-dubbing universities in the world, or whether the medicines are the manufactures of the advertising tribe of quacks, for I here do most seriously say, affirm and swear that I have no need of any of them; that at this time of writing I am not troubled with any disorder, either acute or chronic: that I am neither consumptive or feverish, scorbutic or asthmatic, diarrhæatic or diabetic, gouty or dropfical, cataphoric or paralytic, spasmodic or vertiginous, phthical or pluerisitic, perepneumonic or hypochondriac, chlorical or anasarcal, or tympanic; that I am not tortured with an inflammation of any kind, nor with the jaundice or the dropsy, the dysentery or the dysentery, the gravel or the stone, nor with the cholera, the rickets or the scurvy, the herpes, the erysipilas

erysipilas or the gutta serena: in short, I assure you, Sir, that I am free from all and every kind of disorder, and that I have not even "the symptom of a symptom" of any disease to which astringent, purgative or alterative medicines ought to be applied, whether they be cathartic, emetic, sudorific or diuretic, opthalmic, dentrific or pectoral, stomachic, hepatic, splenetic, hysteric or carminative. I assure you that I have no cold, no cough; that I have had both the chin-cough, the small-pox and the measles; that I am sound, wind and limb, and, excepting only my dread of medicine, and the thoughts of the possibility of Mr. Quackett urging this letter as a proof of insanity, and prescribing for that disorder cupping, bleeding, fasting, and a straight waistcoat, I am in pretty good spirits.

"Don't you think, my dear Mr. Silver-tongue, that when this meets the eyes of my physic-loving tormentor that he will see his own folly, and that, in future, he will give me leave to feel for myself. If he will, I will venture to promise him that I will not suffer even a joint of my little finger to ache with im-

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punity,

punity, but will faithfully commit it to his care, and will give him leave to make himself as miserable and busy over it as he pleases; with this promise, that when it ceases to give me pain he shall lay aside his BUCHAN and the other excitors to the Medical Mania, and not, as he has done lately, apply himself in the creation of ideal misery to himself, and real torture to me.

“ I am, Sir,

“ (With respects to the Club)

“ Your humble servant,

“ MARY QUACKETT.”

My fair Correspondent's Husband appears to be so *far gone* in the *physicomania* that I really am at a loss what to prescribe for so complicated a complaint. There appears only one remedy, and that I dare pronounce an infallible specific, the virtues of which are not excelled by those of any relic in the Saints' Calendar.

lendar: but in this case "the patient must *administer* unto himself." Kings, I am informed (for I never had the honour of dining with any of their Majesties) are attended at table by pages, who taste of every dish before the contents are touched by the royal lips. Now, I would advise Mrs. Quackett to advance her spouse to the high dignity of *Taster General* in his own house: and if he be not very soon completely pilled, purged, potioned, powdered, bled, blistered, clystered and electrified into his senses, I will forfeit, for ever, all pretensions to physical or metaphysical knowledge.

Z.

No. XI.

No. XI.

Thursday, August 6, 1795.

The Mayor of Donchester.

HAVING already introduced my friend Mr. Starlight, to the notice of my readers as a profound philosopher, I shall in this paper bring him forward in his character of a Poet. Of his talents the public will judge; my recommendation will neither shield his faults from censure, nor illustrate his beauties, if, indeed, any passages in his rambling rhymes may claim an humble share of merit. He has been an admirer of the Pierian Sisters from his cradle, having first caught the sacred enthusiasm of the muses from the somniferous songs of his nurse. Though Jonathan is otherwise a very modest man, I have heard him sometimes boast—not without blushing—of being an highly-favoured lover

lover of these coy ladies : but as poets delight in *fiction*, I cannot say that I felt inclined on these occasions to give my friend all the credit he expected.

Without being entirely blind to his own eccentricities, there are few who can distinguish and enjoy the follies of his neighbours with a keener relish than my good-natured friend. Ignorance, vanity and affectation are exquisite luxuries to his satirical taste ; our whimsical bard feasts with more voluptuous delight upon a dish of absurdities, than the most delicate epicure can feel when he enjoys the sublime pleasures of a table fuming with all the dainties in the world. The following tragi-comic story, my friend assures me, is founded upon a real fact, which happened sometime ago, during the benevolent rage for supplying our armies abroad with flannel jackets. Should this bagatelle be approved, Jonathan has promised to favour me with other compositions.

THE
MAYOR OF DONCHESTER,

A TRUE AND LAMENTABLE TALE:

*Shewing how his Worship was dubbed a Knight a day
too soon, and undubbed again a day too late.*

Sweet Girls of Pindus, hither bring
Your drums and bagpipes hollow !
The Mayor of Doncheſter I ſing ;
Aſſiſt me, O Apollo !

His Worſhip is a jolly ſquire,
And loyal as a ſpaniel dog ;
His zeal as ardent as his kitchen fire ;
His head as learned and as big
As that grave philoſophic log,
Whereon Puff trims his Worſhip's funday wig :
Nature has ta'en herculean pains
To ſcour its ample chambers clean from brains ;
And truly at a vaſt expence
Has purified them quite from wit and ſenſe :
Brains, ſenſe and wit are ſuch vile vulgar wares
As ſeldom do diſgrace the ſkulls of Mayors.

—What

—What of this Mayor of Doncheſter, I pray ?

—Sir, he received a LETTER t’other day.

Judge, reader, judge what huge ſurpriſe,
Stretch’d like a pair of moons his eyes ;
Judge how he gap’d for joy, for breath,
And ſhew’d the ruins of his teeth ;
Judge how his head ſublimier grew ;
Judge how his ſhoulders broaden’d too ;
Judge how he threw his arms about ;
Judge how he mov’d his legs ſo ſtout :
So big he looked, you would have ſwore
A giant ſtood where flood a dwarf before !

His tender Wife beheld the ſudden change,
And thought ’twas ſtrange——’twas mortal
ſtrange !

“ O my ſweet ſtars ! Lord ! Harry what’s the
matter ? ”

Cried his pale ſpouſe.—

“ Hark, woman, hold your clatter !

“ I am a Knight, by G— !—look there—look
“ there—

“ A Knight ! Knight ! Knight ! my jewel ! ”
roared the gallant Mayor.

She

She, with a most delicious smile,
Stole the said letter from his Worship's
hand :

She read—she trembled all the while,
For verily the Lady scarce could stand.
Her hands, like admiration stops, she raised,
And stood amazed—amazed—amazed !

“ Hey, Harry, hey ? shall I a Lady be ? ”
“ A Lady, las ? aye 'faith a Queen ! ”
quoth he.

Thus as he spake, upon her apron's lap
Her hands came dashing down with such a
flap,

That made her frightened husband jump,
And tumble retrograde upon his rump :
He fell with such an hollow groan of thunder,
As if a double bass had burst asunder,
She, screaming like a fiddle out of tune,
To 'scape his vengeance—popped into a
swoon.

There, reader, let the loving turtles lie,
Thou'lt see a resurrection by and bye :
Meanwhile behold the wonderful epistle,
And if thou canst not laugh—go whistle.

“ KING

- “ KING GEORGE’s compliments to Mr. Mayor ;
“ QUEEN CHARLOTTE also greets his Lady fair :
“ Their gracious Majesties have learned, with
“ pleasure,
“ How you have sacrificed both time and trea-
“ sure
“ On flannel jackets, breeches, stockings,
“ socks ;
“ Also on good warm petticoats and smocks,
“ To clothe our gallant troops abroad in Flan-
“ ders,
“ Their pretty lasses and their smart com-
“ manders :
“ The QUEEN and PRINCESSES are quite de-
“ lighted,
“ And KING GEORGE swears such deeds shall
“ be requited ;
“ —Come, come to London, Sir—come and
“ be knighted.”

This note, signed GRENVILLE, came by post,
And—cheap enough—a silver sixpence cost.

Lo ! risen from the hard unfeeling floor,
With aching hearts and bones a little sore,
The wry-faced Lady and the limping Mayor
Did

Did for their journey instantly prepare :
The pavement rattles—hark ! a chaise and
four

Waits their high pleasure at the pompous
door.

Just stepping in—my Lady pull'd his sleeve :
“ Stop, stop, *Sir Harry* ! if we go to London
“ On this grand *garter*-business we are undone,
“ Unless you ask the *Corporation's* leave !”

“ Alack, he cried, alack !”

And thumped his wig and staggered back :

His purple nose turned pale with sorrow ;
Down dropped his eye and nether lip ;
An hand he placed on either hip ;
And dismally exclaimed, “ Boy, bring the
“ chaise to-morrow.”

No time must now be lost ; he goes, he sends
To all his wealthy corporation friends :
The sleek-skined Brotherhood soon flocked to-
gether,
All in full spirits and full feather ;
With double chins and rosy faces,
Pictures of Bacchanalian Graces !

Sepulchral

Sepulchral throats, tremendous bellies,
The tombs of flesh, fish, puddings, pies and
jellies!

In solemn state they took their places.

All stared with wide devouring eyes,

Expecting to behold a feast

Of turtle, exquisitely drest,

And hosts of turkies, capons, geese and gibletpies!

They licked their lips and stroked their maws,

And blest the man that first invented jaws!

Jaws formed so wonderful and so complete;

Jaws that can swear, and pray, and lie and eat!

When, lo! ah disappointed paunches!—

Instead of vast sirloins and venison haunches,

Bright dishes, shining knives and forks,

Gay bottles, smiling glasses, smacking corks;

—Uprose the Mayor, with grave demeanour,

And—read the letter—for a dinner!

He ended; and a broad prodigious grin

Screwed every face and tucked up every chin:

But yet mysterious silence hung

A padlock upon every tongue.

Till rearing his triumphant crest,
While stars and garters capered in his breast,
Thus the big Mayor the Aldermen addressed.

- “ Ha ! honest Gemmen, don’t ye see,
“ The King’s most gracious Majesty
“ Has tumbled quite in love with me ?
“ Marry ! I’ll tell ye, worthy Gemmen,
“ I never knew myself before :
“ I’ve always been a simple yeoman,
“ Not over rich nor over poor.
“ To-day a *Man*, like one of you,
“ A *Knight* to-morrow I shall ride
“ In coach and six, with ribband blue,
“ And sword-knot flaming by my side.
“ On honour’s ladder I intend to rise,
“ Step after step until I touch the skies :
“ A Viscount, Earl, a Marquis, Duke I’ll be ;
“ God only knows what may become of me !
“ And really, Gemmen, ’twould be no new
“ thing,
“ But, in *my turn*—I may—I may be
“ King !”

The Aldermen now started from their places,
And open’d all the windows of their faces :

Each

Each viewed the letter with an heart-heaved
groan,
And wished, with all his might, it were his
own.

Then bowing humbly to the *royal* Mayor,
Each offered up a modest prayer.

“ Make me,” said one, “ most gracious Sir ?

“ A learned Lord High Chancellor !”

“ Give me,” another cried, “ the treasury
“ keys,

“ And I’ll be any thing you please !”

“ And I,” exclaimed a man of weight,

“ I’ll be your Minister of State !”

“ Make me your Majesty’s Physician !”

“ Cried a poor, lean, consumptive thing :

“ But I,” quoth one in prime condition,

“ Will roast, try, cook, and cater for the

“ King !”

Each Alderman asserts pretensions,

To places, sinecures and pensions :

And one and all declared their wishes

To share the Monarch’s loaves and fishes.

He, swelling to the size of Atlas big,

Shook

Shook a white shower of powder from his
wig:

Sublime he strode around the hall,
Majestic towering o'er them all;

And looked as gracious as you please.
With such a gait, and such a mien,
An old grey Gander have I seen,
Stalking across the village green
Before a flock of Geese!

"Ask, ask," he cried, "whate'er you want,
"And all, aye more than all, I have I'll
"grant:

"Should heaven bestow this golden fleece,
"By Jove I'll make you Dukes apiece!"

"Fools, fools apiece!" exclaimed a fat
Old wag, who in a corner sat.

"Fools?" cried the Mayer, enraged, con-
founded:

"Fools?" roared the Aldermen astounded.

"Yes, fools apiece! fools altogether!"

Replied the wicked, sneering wag:

"Fools!"

“ Fools! Fools!” he cried; “ fools of a
“ feather !

“ I’ll let the cat out of the bag :

“ This Letter, Sirs, was never wrote by
“ Grenville,

“ But forged, I ween, on quite another an-
“ vil;

“ ’Tis neither franked, nor does the seal dis-
“ play

“ A coat of arms, magnificent and gay :

“ Some *Jacobin* has coined this fabrication,

“ Just to *besool* our learned Corporation !”

He spake and smiled—then turned about

Took down his *chapeau* and went out.

Ghastly and wild his Worship staggered,

And looked as if he had been daggered :

Stung to the stomach with vexation,

The Aldermen all roared, “ D——nation !”

The meeting silent as the breaking day,

And soft as mountain snow dissolved away !

At first his Worship stamped, and stormed, and
swore

He never had been made a fool before,
And therefore could not overlook it:
But second thoughts are best ;—his Worship
then
Swore he would never be a fool again ;
So put his Vengeance in his pocket !

V,

No. XII.

Thursday, August 13, 1795.

To the Whisperer.

“ MR. SILVERTONGUE, ,

“ **T**HERE is not a single word in the English language which hath greater reason to complain of being abused, misplaced and misrepresented, than *Honour* ! A Man of Honour is an appellation whereby, in this Babel-building world, madmen *in* their senses are distinguished from madmen *out* of their senses: the latter of whom are termed lunatics, and, according to the *courtesy* of this civilized land, are loaded with fetters, bedded with straw, fed with gruel, and lodged in the solitary dungeons of Bedlam ; while the former dance in the sunshine of St. James's Court, riot on turtle and champaign, are bound with ribbons and garters,

honoured with titles, and share the plunder of the industrious poor! Can any thing be conceived more burlesque and ridiculous than to call that pitiful wretch a man of honour, whose disposition is so irascible that it is impossible to converse five minutes without affronting him? Can that *thing* be termed an hero, which hath neither the courage to bear an innocent jest, the sense to acknowledge an error or submit to a just rebuke? What a crockery-hearted creature that must be, whose temper is shivered to pieces by a rap on the knuckles, whose blood flies into his cheeks at the sarcastic eye of a Would-be-wit, whose *invincible* honour is *mortally* wounded by the pointing finger of a coxcomb, or whose whole frame trembles like quicksilver at the leering lip of an idiot!

“ True honour cannot be affronted; true magnanimity cannot be shaken, true courage cannot be provoked. It requires more fortitude to forgive, than heroism to revenge, an insult; and he only is a man of honour who *dares* to be a *coward* in the fashionable acceptation of the word; that is one who, in defiance of despotic custom, can *bear* and *forbear*:—the most difficult

cult lesson in philosophy, ethics or religion !
A lesson which no coward can learn.

“ The modern man of honour challenges his antagonist into the field to fight him with sword or pistol. Why ? Because it is the fashion, and he *dare not* do otherwise. If *assassination* were the *ton*, the modern man of honour would glide into the chamber and plunge, nobly plunge his dagger in the sleeping bosom of a brother at midnight ! Why ? Because he is a slave, a coward, who must become a murderer lest knaves should hoot and villains shun his company. The idle hissing of a goose is more terrible to that man—oh, humanity ! how art thou debased !—than all the horrors of a conscience suffocated in blood, or the wrath of an Omnipotent Being, whose eye could annihilate him with a glance, or whose frown could fix him in everlasting agencies !

“ The alarming prevalence of the diabolical, but courtly custom of duelling, induced me to recommend it to the censure of the Whisperer ; particularly, as these fashionable notions of honour are likely to be more universally diffused
among

among all ranks of the community at this alarming military period, when the big bold drum, and animating fife, in every town and village, awake in the breasts of Englishmen the vindictive spirit of Mars. But, above all, the present volunteering rage for swords, cockades and shoulder-knots, while it introduces amongst the most peaceable, well-disposed and respectable part of society the proud ambitious theory, with all the captivating pomp and circumstance of war, threatens also to bring with it, as a concomitant calamity, the idle stalking horse of modern honour. The plain home-spun farmer, who formerly could refer every little difference between himself and his neighbour to the impartial arbitration of a third person, now exalted into a gentleman-soldier, beats his ploughshare into a sword and his pruninghook into a spear, and whenever he fancies himself affronted appeals to those discerning arbiters for justice—say rather, for vengeance! The frugal and industrious tradesman, who hath hitherto supported a family in comfort and with credit, by honest exertions in trade, now suddenly metamorphosed into a man of honour, endowed with all the supernatural heroism of a laced
scarlet

scarlet livery, and the unspeakable courage of a huge cocked hat, falls out with every fool he meets, tilts his nose against every quarrelsome lamp-post, and challenges to mortal combat every jack-ass that hath the insolence to bray in his company!

“ As every rank of men ape the order above them, so shall we find the rage for duelling descending by a regular progression from the court to the cottage. And if the christian system of cutting the throats of our brethern abroad, because they perversely will not let us make them happy in our way, be persisted in a few years longer, soon shall we become an *armed nation* at home: All law and the execution of it, all justice, all humanity will be transported to Botany Bay; and not only the old-fashioned Rights of Men, but even the divine Rights of King and Priests themselves, will be disregarded: every man will be judge, jury and jack-ketch in his own cause: we shall shoot one another with as much *sang froid* as we now destroy partridges, and massacre our brethren as coolly and philosophically as cooks kill poultry for a corporation feast. Nay, who dare presume

presume to say, but, in the course of another seven years, we may all become Cannibals, and human flesh adorn our goodly shambles, and smoke a sweet smelling savour, upon our luxurious tables, in the room of turtle and venison !!!

“ I am,

“ MR. WHISPERER,

“ Your’s and the Public’s humble servant,

“ FRANK FIREBRASS.”

No. XIII.

No. XIII.

Thursday, August 20, 1795.

To the Whisperer.

“ DEAR SILVERTONGUE,

“ AS you have, by inserting among your lucubrations Mrs. Quackett's very moving and lamentable epistle, opened a door through which many unfortunate sufferers may desire to pass, I hope not to be refused the same indulgent attention; though in a case exactly the reverse to the singular grievance of which that ingenious lady so pathetically and feelingly complains.

“ You must understand, Mr. Whisperer, that I was married early in life to a Mr. Handy, whose father was one of the most renowned foxhunters in the county, and his mother the
sole

sole manager of a large estate farmed by herself. Enjoying a strong constitution, and having imbibed, early in life, sentiments of contempt for every species of excellence but that boisterous strength of body arising from athletic exercises, robust manners, and habits of enduring incessant fatigue, Mr. Handy has conceived a strange notion that all ill health is derived from improper indulgencies; that all complaints originate in affected delicacy; and that air, sun, and exercise are not only superior to all the *Materia Medica*, but even preferable to all the actual comforts and tender enjoyments of domestic life. On this ridiculous ground he has broken my constitution by endeavouring to strengthen it, and destroyed my happiness by a determination to encrease it. My person is weakly—my constitution delicate: I am subject to an asthmatical complaint; and though not often absolutely ill, can seldom (owing to Mr. Handy's prejudices) be called well, as he never fails ordering me to follow the hounds for short breathing; obliges me to walk all night in the dew to *chill* away a cold, or compels me to ride on a mettlesome horse for nervous affections. When half dead with terror,
pain,

pain, and fatigue I am carried home by my more compassionate servant, and my mind, as well as body, needs the lenitives of tenderness and consolation, I am cruelly reproached for a whimsical, whining fool, and asked, what the devil I am good for? In aggravation of my misfortunes I am tauntingly told how Mrs. Groomboy, my neighbour, a fortnight after lying-in, cantered fifty miles before dinner on her husband's most spirited hunter; and how the delicate Miss Spankam, her blooming sister, out-galloped a consumption, fenced away a fever, jumped out of a dropsy, and walked down an illiac passion. In vain do I exert myself to keep pace with these gallant female Stentors: my natural vivacity is quite overpowered by the number and impetuosity of its claimants, and I fall the victim of the brutality which I study to attain. I am treated with supercilious contempt by the rustics I despise, and am an object of indifference to the man whom I endeavour in all things to love, honour, and obey: indeed, I am likely soon to cease breathing entirely, through the abundance and excellence of the air I inhale, and to lay down my

K

limbs

limbs in eternal repose, through the invigorating benefits of exercise.

“ If this faint sketch, for it is utterly impossible to give you any adequate idea of the fatigue, hurry and everlasting commotion which I am compelled to undergo, should be of any use in reconciling Mrs. Quackett to her fate, I shall rest satisfied that I have not spent my life wholly in vain, though hurried out of it for want of *some part* of that attention which embitters her days.

“ I am,

“ DEAR MR. SILVERTONGUE,

“ Your humble servant,

“ TENDRESSA HANDY.”

The cruelty of women before, and the tyranny of men after marriage, are the themes of perpetual complaints between the sexes. 'Tis strange that love, in so many instances, should make

make the strong so weak, and the weak so strong, while independent of each other; yet no sooner hath Hymen manacled the tender pair together, than the Goddess of yesterday is reduced to the condition of a bondswoman; and the humble slave who lately poured out his soul in tears and prayers and transports at her feet, assumes the rod and the reins of empire, and commences sovereign for life.

Of all the lingering punishments inflicted by the Lords of Creation on the sex of Queens, there are none more intolerable, none more cruel and unnatural, than the inhuman practice of "killing wives with kindness." Messieurs Quackett and Handy, seem to love their mates so unreasonably well, that one might suppose they languished for the melancholy opportunity to prove that their affection towards them will survive their existence, and that their love will be more pure, more ardent, and more sublime, when the fair martyrs of their tenderness are ravished away from them for ever. They surely think their ladies are *angels*, and piously wish to send them *home* to heaven!

But these compassionate gentlemen are killing their wives to make them live the longer!— I confess I think they are both on the high road to *immortality*! Mr. Quackett has conspired to drown his wife in a sea of physic: Mr. Handy has determined to destroy his spouse with exercise and regimen: and both ladies are likely to expire with too much health. The husbands may live to curse their skill, and to lament their success. Mr. Quackett may find, ere long, that his wife has died sooner *of* the Doctor than she would otherwise have done for want of him: and Squire Handy himself may discover, by the irreparable loss of his lady, that she was as dear to him as the best horse in his stud, or the finest hound in his pack.

Qc



No. XIV.

Thursday, August 27, 1795.

*The Art of Shortening Life.*

WHEN a man is miserable he hath nothing else to do but to make himself as happy as he can. A smile!—a tear!—the agony, the rapture of a moment! Had Man inherited less sagacity from his mother Nature he would never have possessed ingenuity enough to torment himself by anticipation: had he acquired more knowledge from his nurse Art, he would long ere now have discovered the folly of gathering imaginary evils into his bosom, like serpents to sting their way to his heart, and poison his blood. Though human life is very short and precarious, it is nevertheless so full of vanities and vexations, that if a man hath not the spirit to make the best of his way through

it, that which philosophers and fanatics have contemptuously compared to a span will be protracted to many a long and lingering league.— In my own opinion, life, as it is the fashion to lead it now-a-days, is much too long, and true wisdom consists in shortening the road and hastening away the time.

“ This is strange philosophy !” cries a moping melancholy being, who weeps away his weary days in complaining they are too few ! The fewer and better I answer, unless you knew how to enjoy them. But strange as this philosophy appears to you, my solemn friend, try it by the touchstone of your own life, and then say whether it be true or false. Doth not the gloom of your morose mind clog the wheels of time and make it move heavily, like a stage-waggon dreaming along the tedious road ? and while you are repining that the journey is too short, do you not sigh that it were at an end ? Do you not fret and fume at the horses because they are lame and broken-winded, and stumble at every step ? Do not your bones rattle, your head ache, your heart burn, and your feet sting and start with the dull, drowsy motion of the carriage ?

carriage? You are miserable because you cannot be miserable as long as you wish! Take my advice, Sir, and step into a light post-chaise, phaeton, *vis-a-vis*, or any other easy, expeditious whirligig in which you can bowl away with pleasure, and flash like thunder and lightning to your journey's end. This is travelling like a man and, what some folks think better, like a gentleman.

I wish to speak intelligibly, but my pen, with a head as light as a feather, is so fond of flourishes and figures that I frequently can scarce decypher my own meaning, when I read coolly what I have written warmly. I hate and despise froth and folly as much as I abhor and condemn mud and melancholy; but yet I sincerely think, that person makes the *most* of his time who makes the *shortest* of it. A day of delight glides swiftly away, like a smile that appears and vanishes in a moment: an hour of sullenness limps lamely, lazily on, as if every minute had the gout and hobbled on crutches. So that if you calmly measure a day enjoyed with an hour thus miserably mispent, you will find the *longitude* of the latter exceed the former

by

by as many degrees as the real length of the day exceeds an hour. Thus the gloomy Cynic who is three score and ten years in crawling from the cradle to the church-yard, lives longer in imagination than a Methuselah, whose good humour enables him to carry nine hundred *suns* upon his shoulders with more ease than the grumbler carries as many *moons* : or, in less heroic language, the *months* of the latter are longer than the *years* of the former. . When a man smiles, all nature smiles with him ; and to the eye, sparkling with chearfulness, every object reflects pleasure ; spring blooms, and breathes and warbles round him. . When he frowns, creation fades, the sun sickens into a sepulchral lamp, and the desolation of winter rushes over the scene. The romantic lover says, it is the presence of his rosy-dimpled Delia which causes the spring, and her absence that brings on the winter ; but when he grows a little cooler, and sees things with the same eyes as his neighbours do, he finds, if there be a lady in the case, it is Lady Chearfulness, a gay, smiling, prattling, giddy girl, who deceives her lovers of two-thirds of their lives, and would to God the fly nymph

nymph would cheat me out of every moment of mine !

“ Pshaw, idiot ! men cannot always be piping and dancing : spring cannot smile for ever—Is there no summer and winter on this side of the grave ?”

Granted ! Yet in the sultry Dog Days are there no groves, no streams, no vallies to retire into and enjoy the pleasures without the inconveniences of the season ? Even in the dead of winter by what law of nature am I bound to wallow in the snow, walk in the teeth of the north wind, or break the ice of the river to drown myself ? Did you ever hear a cricket sing by a warm fire-side while tempests were blustering and bellowing without ? Is it beneath your dignity as an animal *six feet* high to imitate the cheerfulness of an insect three quarters of an inch long, though, between you and me, if dignity be computed by *feet* a cricket is your equal there at least ? But you would rather mimic the tempest, and growl and shake heaven and earth with your lamentations. And why ? Because winter will not last for ever ! I confess.

fels there is more *sound*, but I question whether there be as much *sense* in this: and so commend me to the cricket and the fire-side. Because life is short you will not enjoy it; because a glass of wine doth not contain a gallon you will perish for thirst rather than drink it.—When I was a child I broke the bones of my hobby-horse because it was not a race horse; And what do you think I did next? Why, Sir, I sat down and cried my heart out of my eyes, because I had then neither the wooden nor the living horse. Now this was acting like a man,—at least such a man as you are. My good Grandmother, a notable interpreter of dreams and omens, laid down her prayer-book, took off her spectacles, and casting *such* a look, first at me and then at the poker, while she smote her breast with inimitable pathos, exclaimed, “*My Gabriel was never made for this world!*” My pious-grandmother was woefully mistaken in this, as well as in many other matters, respecting me: for, upon my conscience, I have lived in the world to this very day, and have found so many high-roads and bye-roads, so many mountains, vallies, rocks, rivers, lakes, seas, forests, deserts, gardens, glades,

glades, meadows, ups and downs, heres and theres, strait and curved lines, points, angles, triangles, circles, squares, superficies, and a million of *et cætera*, that I am sometimes inclined to despair of ever finding the way out again. Death, I am sure, is not the road; for I think a man is never more *in* the world than when he creeps under ground. But all this is digression, for which I am pardonable, especially as some of my gentle readers seem disposed to make a digression themselves into the land of sleep; and I must consequently conclude this essay at the very moment when I was going to be very merry and amusing. I shall, therefore, take another opportunity of publishing some rare secrets in the art of cutting down long lives into short ones, without seeing physicians.

V.

No. XV.

No. XV.

Thursday, September 3, 1795.

“ Let us all be unhappy together.”

IT was well decreed by HIM, who hath done all things well, that the happiness of man should depend more upon himself than upon any thing external. If the real pleasures and pains of life were weighed against each other, the balance would scarcely tremble toward either scale: by the pleasures I mean the simple possession of health and competence; by the pains I understand sickness, want, and all temporal misfortunes. It is very true, the riches of this world are scattered in the most unequal manner. Not so the happiness. Who will point out that spot upon the globe which, of all others, enjoys the healthiest climate, the most exuberant soil, and whose inhabitants are blest beyond the lot of other men? Doth there exist

exist such a place? I answer, No. Every country possesses its peculiar advantages: you prefer England—your neighbour is a Frenchman, and extols France:—you love the pleasant air, the changing seasons, and the rich vegetation of the temperate zone! The Negro shivers, the Greenlander burns under the sun that thrills your veins with delight. The Laplander, dwelling amid the horrors of eternal winter, glows with a thousand transports, of which the inhabitants of gentler climes can form no conception, because they view only the surface of his situation: the freezing blast that would chill their blood warms and invigorates him, and opens the same rose of health upon his cheek that the sun awakens on theirs. He glances over the snow in his sledge, drawn by dogs or reindeer, with more satisfaction than the drowsy Nabob reclines upon his splendid palanquin, borne on the shoulders of his slaves: his shining wilderness and rocks of glittering ice yield as much delight to his eye, as meadows glowing with flowers and mountains cloathed with vineyards to others. the meteors that play on his nocturnal hemisphere are

no less glorious in appearance to him, than the golden lustre of the day, that illumines the regions of the torrid zone.

Every sphere of life, like every varying climate, may boast its own exclusive privileges and blessings. Whence then comes all that misery among individuals which renders the shortest life too long? Because men will not be content with their own, unless they can grasp the advantages of their neighbours. If your patrimony be only ten square yards of ground, upon which grows an apple-tree, and your neighbour possesses ten acres of luxuriant and highly cultivated land, teeming with flowers and planted with all kinds of fruit-trees, why should this distress you? Cannot you eat your apples in their season as comfortably as if nobody had more or less than yourself? No; you *will* not: your ten square yards must produce as much as your neighbour's ten acres. Accordingly, you ingraft shoots of pears, cherries, peaches, nectarines, grapes, and all the various fruits under the sun, upon your apple-tree, and sow your morsel of land with the seeds of a
thousand

thousand exotic flowers: your apple-tree, mangled to death, springs up green for one moment, but the vegetation is so rank that the whole perishes the next; and then you, deprived by your own folly both of apples and potatoes, go and hang yourself on the blasted tree! Thus do men manufacture their own sorrows: they weave the web and wear it; then, like Hercules when he put on the envenomed coat, run mad and burn themselves!

Every degree of men torment themselves with the imagined happiness of the order above them. The labourer longs for the hounds and horses of the squire; the squire pants for a coronet; the lord, while he bows at the levee of the king, sighs for a levee of his own, the monarch grasps at empire; the emperor would be— a god! Fools! your heads may well ache, and turn round like weather-cocks, with bearing them so high and perpetually looking upwards. Truly, honest folks! you forget that, with continually aspiring at things above, you lose the enjoyment of those within your reach.

If you make yourselves miserable by contrasting your humble pleasures with the prouder possessions of others, does it not follow, by a parity of reasoning, that you might felicitate yourselves by comparing your situation with the calamitous fate of thousands below you, who, in their turn, but with far more reason, envy your superior lot? Man was formed with countenance erect, that he might look up only to heaven and down upon the world. But one would be apt to suppose the men of the present age walked upon their heads, for they look *up* to the earth and *down* upon heaven, as if the ground was above, and the sky beneath their feet.

Lords of creation! Slaves of yourselves! you fret because you cannot monopolise all the bliss of all the universe: you want the eye of the hawk, the wings of the eagle, the strength of the lion, the swiftness of the deer. And I will tell you, friend, what you want more than all—the brains of yon calf: see how merry the rogue is; he capers and wantons about, little dreaming

dreaming that the butcher is just stepping over the next stile. His days are fewer than your's, and yet he is ten times happier; aye, and ten times wiser. He is content with the milk of his mother, and does not lie down and moan because he cannot suck all the cows in the pasture dry: while you are starving because, forsooth, you cannot devour all the turtle, and venison, and beef, and mutton in the world!

If you can compose your appetite with five ounces of meat, can you repine because you once saw Alderman Gander, at a corporation feast, gormandise twice as many pounds? You forget a trifling circumstance on that occasion: Don't you recollect, that in the middle of his dinner his worthip was carried off by an apoplectic fit? If you will believe me, sir, and I have never yet deceived you, had not old Gander been thus suddenly cut short he would have swallowed all the provisions, dishes, knives, forks, tables, chairs, and guests too, yourself not excepted, and marched home puffing, gasping, staring, groaning, as if he had got Mount Vetusius in his belly! Miserable as you are,

take my word, you would have had something more than a pretence to make wry faces, if he had washed you down his throat with an hog-head of Nottingham ale !

But, hold ! my pen seems to have drunk too freely—no liquor under the moon is so intoxicating as ink.†

V.

No. XVI.

No. XVI.

Thursday, September 10, 1795.

To the Whisperer.

“ *Mr. Gabriel Silvertongue,*

“ *SIR,*

“ **I** AM the most injured character alive or dead. All the faults, the errors and the infirmities of flesh and blood are cruelly and unjustly charged home to me : the crimes of every body are piled on the shoulders of poor Nobody. I who am the very mirror of all the negative virtues, who am wholly exempt from all the positive vices; I who am more harmless than the dove, more pure than æther, more innocent than the child unborn, am accused every moment in my life, of actions, which

which I could not commit without changing my nature. Calumniated and persecuted as I have been, for these six thousand years past, it is high time for me to break that solemn death-like silence, which hath hitherto been one of my characteristics, and thunder my grievances in the ear of the Whisperer. I have borne my burthen too long without murmuring: the load hath now become intolerable, and threatens to sink me into the grave; but even the grave can afford no asylum for me: Nobody can never *cease* to exist,—for he hath never yet begun.

“ I am the son of Nothing: like my father, I never have been, I am not, and I never will be any thing or any body. My person is infinite nonentity, and my presence fills the void of everlasting space: my life is an immortality of non-existence, for though still unborn I am coæval with eternity. All my attributes are perfect: they can neither be debased nor amended; they can receive no addition, they can suffer no diminution. Equally above the necessity of action, and the subjection of passion, I remain immutably the same, confined

fin'd to no place, circumscribed by no time, liable to no accidents; incomprehensible myself, yet comprehending all things, I am what I am not! All nature around carries throughout her whole system the seeds of decay: suns, stars and worlds burst into being from the womb of darkness: they rise—exist—perish! Bubbles on the ocean of eternity! Atoms dancing together one moment—vanishing away the next!

“Millions of these worlds have I seen glittering like the dew drops of morning, and cheering with their little trembling lustre the vast and desolate domains of my father Nothing: but none, none, Mr. Whisperer, ever presumed to prophane my sacred name, nor disturb the dread tranquillity of my repose, till, in an evil hour, your unlucky world was brought to light,—I verily believe on purpose to torment me! Since the birth of that mischievous planet, I have never enjoyed one comfortable nap of momentary rest. The brawling, peevish, miserable things that creep upon its surface have worried and persecuted me without ceasing.—They have impiously degraded me from my
natural

natural and primæval dignity, and reduced me even below themselves, that they might make Nobody the Scape Goat of all their iniquities.

“Weak, wicked Bipeds! lowest in the scale of intellectual Beings, whose petty world is the Pandora’s Box of the Creation, who are yourselves only the wreck of humanity, how dare you violate the character, libel the name and insult the sovereign majesty of Nobody? But Nobody will take vengeance upon you: the day, the black, the bitter and tremendous day of retributive Justice is fast approaching when all the crimes follies and enormities, wherewith you have loaded and reproached me, shall rebound with irresistible fury upon your own devoted heads, and overwhelm you with confusion and despair: the mountains you have impiously hurled against me shall bury you in their ruins!

“The Church is robbed! who hath committed sacrilege? Nobody! The peace of a family is murdered! Who planted horns on the honest front of the Husband? Nobody!

The

The fair reputation of a virtuous woman, an amiable wife, a tender mother is blasted by the baneful breath of slander! Who circulated the lying calumny? Nobody!

“A gay stripling, just emancipated from college, wearies the Fates with vows to squander away the hoarded treasures of his avaricious fire, as rapidly and no less honourably than they have been acquired, provided they will put him in immediate possession of those mines of slumbering wealth. Propitious to his prayers the Gout descends; and in less than a fortnight the disconsolate heir follows the relics of his honoured father to their everlasting home, in all the solemn pomp of sable sorrow! Tears distress the living, but comfort not the dead! The house of mourning is turned into a temple of Bacchus: the generous youth launches out into the ocean of pleasure: soft breathe the favouring gales, and swift along the liquid waves the gallant vessel glides: sweet smile the summer seas, and bright the sun, and constellations shine. He bathes in bliss, he swims in joy. Rocks, whirlpools, quicksands, tempests and tornados all assail him

—he

—he perishes in a moment! Ah! who misguided him?—Nobody!

“ A fine Lady, with deep, sincere devotion, worships a magnificent looking glass, which smiles with the sweetest condescension upon its humble adorer, whenever she bends her pious eyes upon its beauteous countenance.—Returning home from the play, on some unlucky evening, she flies with fond enthusiasm to the sanctuary of her divinity:—shrieks—faints—recovers!—her charming idol, like Dagon, lies dashed in shivers at her feet!—Rouse the children from their beds; summon the servants—ring for the Lord of the house! What impious hand performed this direful deed? Who slew the God of *reflection*?—Was it my Lord, justly jealous of this formidable rival having stolen away the heart of his lady? Was it the grim visaged Governante, who in a fit of fury dashed the mirror to pieces, for telling her that all her dimples were wrinkles, that spectacles added no lustre to her eyes, and rouge lent no beauty to her cheeks? No—it was—Nobody!

“ Plots and conspiracies are formed—no where: Treason is discovered—not to exist: The Church, King, Constitution are in danger—from nothing: the nation is alarmed, all Europe is alarmed, the whole world is alarmed! And who hath alarmed them?—Nobody!

“ Seats in Parliament are bought and sold—by Nobody. Consciences are bartered for Places and Pensions—by Nobody. Titles are lavished upon the most worthless of men, and mitres showered upon the heads of persecuting zealots—by Nobody!

“ Who breaks the ten commandments? Nobody! Who keeps them? Nobody! “Aye there’s the rub:” Nobody is as innocent as he is guilty of all the crimes alledged against him: his accusers can just say *half as much*:—they are *only* guilty.

“ I could fill more volumes than have been written or printed since the world began, with a bare enumeration of the deeds which I never did, the sins which I never committed, the laws which I never broke, and the duties which I

M

never

never transgressed, yet these, all these have been laid to my account! Even Balaam's ass, sinking under the merciless cudgel of his master, found a tongue to rebuke the prophet for his cruelty, and shall I, when injured, abused and insulted beyond what Any body can endure, be refused the privilege of complaint?

" Pray, Mr. Silvertongue, tell your ill-natured world, that I am determined no longer to suffer its impertinence and injustice: particularly as I have, after a long laborious research, at length discovered, and will expose to public ridicule and public resentment, the lurking villain, who from the Birthday of Time to the present moment, hath done so much mischief in my name. It is my mortal enemy, my everlasting accuser,—that sly, intriguing, smiling Hypocrite—SOMEBODY!—who is guilty of all the wickedness under the sun, and scorning to criminate himself or slander the chaste reputation of his neighbour, very prudently lays the blame on

NOBODY.

Q.

No. XVII.

No. XVII.

Thursday, September 17, 1795.

Vesuvius Bewitched.

DURING the late tremendous Eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, the pious inhabitants of Naples lifted up their voices to the Head of Saint Januarius, and earnestly implored it to save them from the threatened destruction. The sacred Skull was borne about in triumph by the Archbishop, and, no doubt, exerted its best abilities to save its Worshippers from ruin. This ridiculous ceremony gave birth to the following satirical Poem, by my friend Mr. Jonathan Starlight.

VESUVIUS BEWITCHED;

OR,

The Spell of St. Januarius.

PART I.

WHEN mad Vesuvius stormed and thundered,
So loud that Naples could not rest,
Aloof the people stood and wondered,
And thought the mountain was *possessed*.
The hardest hearts began to fail,
And long the broadest faces grew ;
The plumpest purple nose turned pale,
And every cheek looked blue.
The jolly drunkard, half seas over,
Turned in a moment white and sober ;
The parson, preaching in the church,
Flew off and left his audience in the lurch ;
For had his reverence stayed to pray,
The honest folks had 'woke—and run away.
The

The pretty Nuns, for husbands whining,
(Renouncing Satan and his works)
All thought themselves in Styx immerging;
The dove eyed Monks on *turtle* dining,
Could scarcely hear their knives and forks,
Which made them bellow to the blessed
Virgin :

But all their piety was scarcely able
To keep the plates and glasses on the table.
The hangman trembled at the gallows,
The cunning culprit slipped the noose ;
The consternation reached the palace,
And Majesty looked like a goose.

Ave Maria, *Paternoster* rung,
From every Courtier's lying tongue ;
Even Ministers were roused at last,
And stared most frightfully aghast !
Prayers, curses, vows and oaths all mingled,
And shrieks of anguish tore high heaven ;
Terror through every bosom tingled ;
For, oh ! what sins were unforgiven !

Ten million tears from pious eyes,
From pious hearts ten million sighs,
Were spent in idle air ;
And ah ! in vain the roughest stones
Were smooth'd by humble marrow bones,

Madonna would not hear :
Vesuvius, spite of all their lamentation,
Still dealt redoubling desolation.

At length the folks grew hoarse and weary
With bawling on the Virgin Mary ;
The Virgin Mary sick in bed,
Or what is much more likely—*dead* !
They then resolved, with throats full sore,
Never to court the deaf old lady more ;
But, in this urgency precarious,
Invoke the head of Januarius :
That holy head where wisdom reigns,
Unfettered with a load of brains ;
That sacred head with outside varnished,
The inside empty, swept and garnished,
Fit mansion for an angel guest !
—But fitter for a spider's nest ! !

The good Archbishop, on his naked knees,
Thus prayed unto the pate :
“ Good Head of Januarius, if you please,
“ Arise and save our ruined state :
“ Yon awful mountain, armed with thunder,
“ Pours forth destruction every minute.
“ Most

“ Most gracious Saint ! I should not wonder,
“ If forty thousand devils were in it !
“ Rife, potent Head ! and cast out all their le-
“ gions !
“ And save, O save, thine own devoted regions ! ”
He paused ; the people stared with *wonderment* ;
The head was *silent*—silence gives *consent* !

The good Archbishop reared :
The venerable Head on high,
Which verily appeared
Fierce as a comet in the sky :
But though it frowned, and scowled, and
looked so big,
That all the people quaked for dread,
Vesuvius did not care a fig,
Which monstrously provoked the head !

As on the brazen serpent gazed,
The sons of Israel much amazed,
So stared the infatuated throng
Upon the head, with *faith* most strong ;
Though not quite strong enough, d’ye see ?
To hurl the mountain headlong in the sea !

At

At length, with sacred phrenzy fired,
Mad as a fury, as a saint inspired,
The Head exalted o'er the croud,
Then to the burning mountain spake aloud :
 Though not a soul upon the ground,
 With ears of flesh and blood,
 Dull, vulgar organs, worse than wood,
 Could hear the mystic sound !
The *Muse* alone, whose subtle ears,
Can drink the music of the spheres,
She, only she, the sermon heard,
Which faithfully she will record,
Just as 'twas uttered word for word :
But hold, she's out of breath—and rhyme !
—We'll have the *spell* another time !

PART II.

THUS to Vesuvius Mount, in labour,
Spake Januarius, like a neighbour :
“ Hold thy tongue, thou haughty hill,
“ Peace, proud mountain ! peace, be still !
“ Wherefore dost thou rage and roar,
“ Boil the ocean, shake the shore ?
“ Like a cat, whom boys assail,
“ With a firebrand at her tail,
“ Spitting, screaming, scratching, swearing,
“ Bouncing, biting, tumbling, tearing :
“ Or some bull, of giant size,
“ Front of thunder, lightning eyes ;
“ Round a stake by butchers rated,
“ And by dogs on all sides baited,
“ Some he tosses, some he gores,
“ While he foams, and fights, and roars.
“ Cease, Vesuvius ! cease thy riot,
“ Pry’thee, neighbour, do be quiet ;

“ Put

“ Put thy night-cap on thy head,

“ Put it on and go to bed !”

The soothing Saint the mountain thus addressed;
Vesuvius laughed, and swore he would not rest;
But burst and thunder night and day,
Till he thundered all his *gripes* away.
In solemn truth this was no frolic,
Vesuvius, Sirs, had got the cholic,
And in his hollow bowels rumbling,
Tormenting gusts of wind were grumbling,
Just like the sound of corporation bellies,
Yearning for custards, syllabubs and jellies !
The sacred Skull now flew into a passion,
And fulminated forth this adjuration.

“ By the Pope’s most holy toe !

“ By his crowns in tripple row !

“ By his power infallible !

“ By his keys of Heaven and Hell !

“ By the blessed Virgin Mary,

“ Chaste as butter from the dairy !

“ By the Manger and the Stable,

“ Brought by angels (says the fable)

“ From Judæa through the air

“ To Loretto, landed there,

“ And

“ And a gorgeous palace built,
“ Rich, immensely rich—with guilt! *
“ By that Afs, who, when alive,
“ Had but *four* legs, now has *five*! †
“ By that finger most anointed,
“ Wherewith John the Baptist pointed! ‡
“ By that wond’rous tongue, which set,
“ Could catch fishes like a net! §

“ By

* The Virgin hath a most sumptuous country-seat at Loretto, where she lives in all the pomp of Diana of Ephesus, and most graciously receives all the rich presents brought by her humble devotees, who flock to her levee from all quarters, laden with wealth and sins. Her Ladyship kindly eases them of both, and sends them home sterling faints.

† *Five* different Churches shew a leg a piece of the Afs whereon Christ rode to Jerusalem!

‡ The Finger of John the Baptist is to this day preserved in a vial, and works many signs and wonders; but, in the present dearth of faith, few folks believe them.

§ When St. Anthony preached on the sea-shore, the Fishes popped their speckled noses above water, and slept as devoutly during divine service as any audience in Christendom.

“ By that consecrated skull,
 “ Which laboured and brought forth—a
 “ mole ! *
 “ By the legs and ribs of dogs !
 “ By the snouts and teeth of hogs !
 “ By the tails and paws of cats !
 “ By the marrow bones of rats !
 “ Which the pious, in all ages,
 “ Worshipped as the limbs of sages :
 “ Faith they were not much mistaken,
 “ Saints are *cured* like beef and bacon,
 “ And cannonized thro’ the
 “ Is as good as an apostle !

“ By

* At a village, in Italy, some time ago, a sexton, digging a grave, threw up a dry skull which, to his utter astonishment, began to tumble about, and shew signs of life. He ran aghast to tell the clerk, the clerk flew to inform the parson, the parson whipped on his boots and horse, and galloped off to the bishop’s palace, leaving word for the bells to be rung. The bishop instantly put himself at the head of all the priests, monks, nuns, and children in the neighbourhood ; and carried the sacred skull in grand procession to the cathedral, where they deposited the precious relic on the altar, and began to say mass. When all the knaves in the parish had assembled to laugh, and all the fools to wonder, lo ! in the midst of the awful solemnity, forth, from the cranny of the skull, where once had stood a goodly nose, peeped—a Mole, and squeaked as much as to say, “ Go on, good folks, it is only me ! ! ! ”

- “ By the mystic nuptial vows,
“ Of state husband and church spouse;
“ In whose *self-denying* marriage,
“ Every birth is a *miscarriage* !
“ Bishops, cardinals and priests,
“ Tithes, establishments and tests,
“ Church and State, thrice happy pair !
“ These thy sons and daughters are !
“ By the right divine of Kings !
“ By a million *such like* things !
“ By the *People's* antient right
“ To sweat and toil with all their might &
“ With misery and misfortune broke,
“ To beat the billows, bear the yoke,
“ With raging thirst 'midst fountains burn,
“ And beg the very bread they earn !
“ By veils of vestal Nuns demure !
“ By cowls of Monks I thee adjure !
“ By Pilgrims' slippers filled with pease !
“ By Hermits fasting on fat geese !
“ By mitres and by sleeves of lawn !
“ By Curates' rusty coats—in pawn !
“ By rich men's smiles, by poor men's tears !
“ By Vice' hopes, by Virtue's fears !
“ By Dives feasting with his wh—e !

N

“ By

“ By Lazarus dying at his door !
“ By Folly reeling drunk at noon !
“ By Merit wailing to the moon !
“ By pampered Villainy carested !
“ By starving Honesty distressed !
“ By Infidelity at court !
“ By poor Religion, fortune’s sport !
“ Now last, but not the least divine,
“ By this grave Loggerhead of mine,
“ I do adjure thee once again O,
“ Hold thy peace thou mad Volcano !
“ Or by all these sacred things,
“ Popes, Priests, Cardinals and Kings !
“ I’ll send thee to thy reckoning straight,
“ With all thy sins upon thy pate !”

Thus cried the zealous Saint inspired ;
But though he bawled till he was tired,
Still black Vesuvius from his crater,
Spat fire and brimstone at the sun,
And rivers of sulphureous matter,
From every side in blazing torrents run.

Now suddenly the mountain shot,
A storm of pumice stones red hot,
Full at his reverend nose !

The

The frighted People ran like Tartars,
Vesuvius pelted them like Martyrs,
And dealt to every back its share of blows.
Thus sorely pressed, themselves and Saint from
death
Were saved by heels and not by faith !

V.

No. XVIII.

Thursday, September 24, 1795.

To the Whisperer.

“ *Mr. Silvertongue,*

“ *SIR,*

“ **Y**OU must know I am one of those mortals who spend a deal of time about trifles; a circumstance, whether arising from habit or some constitutional defect, I cannot say; but so it is, that I not unfrequently consume many hours of a day in my garden, sometimes in analyzing the different species of flowers, sometimes in waging war against the caterpillars, and other times in the more laborious department of the spade.

“ It

“ It was in this last occupation I yesterday became tired, with what an idle fellow would call hard working ; and, in consequence, retired into my parlour, and throwing my wearied limbs upon an old-fashioned sofa, I yielded to the all-commanding impulse of nature. In short, I fell asleep ; and, by the power of fancy, soon found myself in a far distant country, and in a situation that admitted of no other alternative than returning immediately, or otherwise making the tour of the island (for such I afterwards found it) in order, traveller-like, at my return, to commence author. Without much hesitation, I chose the latter, and having procured a dapper looking fellow for my guide, and adjusting every thing necessary for a long journey, we set out, but had not travelled far, before I congratulated myself on the choice of a companion. The shrewdness of his remarks, the pertinancy of his answers, and an assiduous attention to please, were circumstances highly flattering.

“ After much discourse on a variety of subjects, I next turned my thoughts to those objects the most engaging to travellers ; and, on

enquiry, found there was only one curiosity in the country, but such as would gratify all the virtuosos in the universe, and that we were in the direct road to it; being, by this time, at the end of a spacious plain, terminated by a wood of large extent, which I immediately entered by a very inviting avenue. This my guide, in order to magnify the importance of his services, had suffered me to do; but he soon reconducted me to an opening of far less attracting appearance, informing me, at the same time, of my narrow escape from the *Golden Gate* and *Pleasant Ascent*. Near to this gate I plainly perceived a smoke of aromatic flavour, accompanied with a certain magnetic influence.

“ We now continued our journey up hill, through a zig-zag by-path, covered with briars and underwood, and the trees so thick and interwoven above as to exclude the light of heaven. After much fatigue, we at length came to a small open lawn, where stood a lofty elm, to which was affixed a kind of orchestra, ascended by a flight of steps. These we mounted, and my guide, by the assistance of a key,

key, opened a small box in the front, where we found some refreshments of very exhilarating quality. Next, by the help of a perspective glass, we clearly perceived, on the other side of the wall, an extensive pleasure ground, and an oblique view of the *Golden Gate*, from which, in a direct line towards a high mount, where stood a superb palace, arose a gradual ascent of white marble steps, of prodigious breadth, supported on each side, the whole length, by a noble balustrade of cedar wood, overlaid with gold.

“ On either side were pleasure-grounds laid out in the greatest taste, and occupied by a number of people, sauntering about in all directions; whereas those on the marble steps were all verging upwards towards the palace: some were progressive, whilst others were little more than stationary, though all keeping their faces in one and the same direction. Most of those near the *Golden Gate* were employed in burning something in pots, which, I learned, was nothing else than the incense of their own estimation. This accounts for the smoke alluded to.

“ Proceeding

“ Proceeding on our journey, we at length came to a level with the palace. Here we perceived the end of the marble steps and pleasure-grounds; both of which were terminated by a large folding gate, covered with laurel and ivy of very luxuriant growth, and corresponding with a high turret-wall. This was called the *Gate of Vanity*, and many entered it, contrary to a supposition I had already formed. The palace, of which we now had a near and comprehensive view, was grand and majestic, and consisted of many orders. Indeed, for brilliancy and magnificence, it exceeded all description.— In the front were a number of individuals walking to and fro in an easy and dignified attitude. They had on vestures of different colours and texture; and only in one instance resembled each other; namely, in having green garlands on their brows, though some of these appeared evidently to be much withered. Many of them were passing in and out, as if inmates of the palace.

“ Having, by this time, passed the outer court-gate of this magnificent structure, we soon entered a small wicket-door, in the northern

northern front, and found ourselves in a spacious passage, extending from the back to the front door; the latter of which seemed large, and over-grown with flourishing ever-greens, with which all the different professors of this place, who entered by the wicket-door, were crowned, after having passed through their respective departments of science. On looking to my right, I perceived a door, over which was the following superscription:—*The School for Physic*—Bless me, thought I, is all this magnificence for sick and wounded? On opening this door we came into an extensive lobby, communicating with many other departments through the medium of other doors, over which were other superscriptions, such as, *Anatomical Department, Surgical Department*, and so going on through all the various branches of Physic.

“ On entering the first of these places, I was struck with the grand and beautiful appearance of a Goddess, elevated on a throne on the opposite side of the hall, who, descending thence, complimented us on our arrival; and, amongst many other things, congratulated me on having avoided the *Golden Gate* and *Pleasant Ascent*,
and

and observed, I had been extremely fortunate in the choice of a guide. Whilst the Goddess and my companion were in conversation, as I supposed, on the subject of our visit, I began to look about me. The first thing which attracted my attention was the following motto, inscribed in large capitals on the front of the throne:—*Man, know thyself.* Against one of the large pillars of the hall was a tablet, on which was engraven the following inscription: *The Anatomy of the Human Body and Mind taught here.* The Goddess now presented me with an epitome of the nature of this institution, denominated—*The College of Truth.*—“There are nine sisters of us,” says she, “whose province it has always been to preside over and foster the Genii of Knowledge; but observing, with deep concern, notwithstanding our exertions, that error and gross darkness pervaded the great bulk of mankind; to obviate these we resolved to concentrate our endeavours, and give greater energy to our labours, by building a College, in which many eminent philosophers of both Greece and Rome were educated, and by whom mankind became more civilized and enlightened. After some time,
in

in the midst of our pursuits, a violent tempest arose in the north, which spread ruin and devastation throughout the civilized world; and our College was swept away in the general wreck, with most of the documents and curiosities therein contained. Soon after this, sprang a race of monsters (the history of which I shall give you in a more proper place) who were continually retarding the rebuilding of this college, by their threats and depredations upon the workmen and building. Notwithstanding the continued warfare and embarrassment experienced from these enemies, this building hath long been nearly completed. A variety of circumstances contributed to effect this; such as long truces, or certain advantages obtained from the enemy, either from fear or weakness. This cruel foe, however, hath lately commenced hostilities against us with greater vigour than usual; occasioned no less from taking a number of foreigners of their own species into pay, than some improvement in the science of tactics; particularly in the use of their great guns, which they most furiously play upon us, when either our workmen are busy or when the professors are lecturing; insomuch, that they

they are obliged to desist immediately, for fear of the whole fabric coming down about their ears."

"The Goddesses next proceeded to inform me respecting some peculiarities attendant on admission. "There are two modes of matriculation—one by the front, the other by the back-door; the latter possessing advantages far superior to the former. To illustrate this," continues the Goddess, at the same time taking from her bosom a small microscope, "those who enter by the back-door will view objects a thousand times magnified through this glass; whereas those who enter by the front door will receive no advantage, but, to many, objects will appear magnified in an inverse ratio. To account for this strange phenomenon, some have attempted, from accidental causes; such as the smoke arising from the incense pots on the marble steps, and which those who enter by the front-door are obliged to pass. Some are of opinion, the ivy and laurel, which those who enter the *Gate of Vanity* are apt to pluck, and wear on their foreheads, after withering, emit some particles very deleterious to the sight.

fight. Others will have it that a continued exposure to the sun-beams reflected from the front of the palace, conduces much to this effect.—To prove the utility of this glass," adds she, those to whom it is of no advantage for ever remain under-graduates ; whereas, on the contrary, the professors sprung from a different description."

" Passing on more within the centre of the hall, we observed a large table of uncommon construction, surrounded by a number of professors' chairs, on which were engraved the names of their respective owners. Above these were also circular benches, elevated one above another, quite in the amphitheatric stile. " This," says the Goddess, " is our *Anatomical School*, and here the different professors, under my auspices, read lectures at certain hours of the day. We begin with man physically, then morally, and afterwards politically ; for we are well persuaded, this knowledge is of so much importance, when once acquired, that all other kinds will easily follow ; notwithstanding, this doctrine but ill accords with the sentiments of you Europeans, who commit the culture of this study

to a few individuals, whose qualifications are either defective, or whom passion or prejudice render incompetent to such a task."

"The Goddess next opened a pair of large folding doors, occupying one side of the hall, where was their museum, consisting chiefly of anatomical preparations, piled up in the greatest order, as to the different and respective parts of the body.

"The brain principally occupied our attention. It consisted almost entirely of small glands, whose office was to secrete a fine subtil matter to be deposited in the centre of the pineal gland, in a cyst of peculiar texture. The rest of this gland, and which appeared, by the aid of a second microscope, to be as large as the dome of St. Paul's, consisted of a number of chambers, such as those of *Perception*, *Memory*, *Reflection*, *Credulity* and *Hypocrisy*.

"The chamber of *Perception* was oblong, and attached in the form of a vestibule to that of *Memory* and *Reflection*. The entrance into it was by a door of peculiar construction, having
a latchet

a latchet that corresponded with all the organs of sense; any of which, by the power of sympathy, were capable of opening it. On the door posts not unfrequently grew a couple of fungous excrescences, that prevented the door from being opened, without the application of some violent stimulus. The one of these is called *Prejudice*, and the other *Superstition*.—The best remedies against these, are a frequent use of the door, and the application of a certain phosphorus refracted from the chamber of Reflection. We found nothing else remarkable in this department, save an uncommon degree of transparency, variegated chiefly with those colours observed on the retina.

“ The chamber of *Memory* was evidently an elongation of that of *Perception*, and now necessarily came into view. On its sides was laid a kind of mortar or Paris-plaster of considerable thickness, indented by a vast number of figures or hieroglyphics. It is the nature of this mortar to grow harder by age; therefore, those impressions last made are generally the faintest. Hence the reason why old people

retain better in their memory things done in youth or the prime of life than in old age.

“ Sideways of this, and through a glassy transparent medium, was the chamber of *Reflection*; which differed nothing from the last, except in the particular only of every thing being inverted. When the powers of *reflection* are in action, a certain phosphorus issues out from the mortar, and irradiates the chamber of *Memory*. In short, there is evidently a great coincidence in the functions of these two respective chambers: and, besides, there is another peculiarity attending them, which is, as they become stored with objects their sides are proportionably distended; so that, in some preparations of what had been termed thinking men, these chambers nearly occupied the whole gland.

“ Adjoining to the chamber of *Memory*, but at a considerable distance from those of *Perception* and *Reflection*, was the chamber of *Credulity*.— It was large and well stored; but, for the life of me, I cannot describe one-tenth of what I saw. The opening into it was very spacious, and by a pair of large folding doors—the one
having

having communication with the organs of hearing, and the other with those of sight. The first things presenting themselves on our entrance, were a number of very frightful objects, painted against the side; such as spectres, apparitions, hobgoblins, witches, and a long *et cetera*. At a distance from these were others of a more agreeable form, particularly one, which was an elderly gentleman, seated in a kind of state chair, with four-and-twenty attendants. He had on a three crowned hat and purple regalia. From his mouth issued forth a parchment label, with the following inscription:—*Crecds, bulls, censures, premunires, excommunications, interdicts, &c.* In one hand was a packet, with *indulgences* written thereon, and a cringing mortal in the act of receiving them. In the other hand was another packet of large magnitude, bearing this inscription:—*The price of her wares.* This another servile object was in the act of delivering. Of the names of these two, one was *Secular* and the other *Regular*. In another part of the room we observed a person in the midst of a crowd; whether gathered together from the physical appearance or oratory of the man, but he actu-

ally was delivering out packets of panaceas, infallible nostrums, &c. and receiving something in return. Not far from hence were placed a number of gamblers, jugglers, swindlers and the like, playing off a thousand arts and devices, and not without success. Besides these were a number of inferior objects, too tedious to enumerate. Another peculiarity attendant on this chamber is, that if it is small or great the rest will be inversely proportionate.

“Next to this, and at a considerable distance, was the chamber of *Hypocrisy*, situated beneath the rest. Its entrance was small and serpentine, notwithstanding we had a good view of the interior part; which apparently was hung round with a white satin tapestry, bedewed with a fine fragrant oil, constantly exuding from its surface. This oil is very grateful to the animal spirits, but, when long exposed to its influence, the brain becomes intoxicated, and the heart not unfrequently swelled to a prodigious bulk. From this, and the chamber of *Credulity*, descended two small tubes; the one to the greater and the other to the less cavity of the heart.—

This

This department was quite empty, except the fine exhalations issuing from the oil.

“The Goddess having touched the tapestry by a magic-wand, the scene was instantly reversed, for now appeared crocodiles, serpents, daggers, wolfsbane, and every other kind of poison; and, instead of the fine oil, a most putrid stench issued forth insomuch that we hurried on to the next shelf, on which were a number of compound preparations, such as the brain and the heart, with their natural connections and appendages. The first we examined was one of the popes of Rome, and after expressing my surprise that his holiness had not been better taken care of; my guide laconically whispering me in the ear, reminded me of the old adage. *Every thing is to be had for money.* “Besides,” adds he, “there were formerly no English guards at Rome.” This hint proved a home stroke, for the blushing and confusion that ensued was sufficiently indicative of what nation gave me birth. After a slight apology from my companion we adverted to the mechanism of this preparation, viz. the head and heart.—The convexity of the latter was smooth, and
blood

blood coloured and the texture hard, and without the least elasticity. On opening it we saw the great cavity communicating with the chamber of *Hypocrisy* in the pineal gland, so large as nearly to obliterate its adjoining cavity : there also was some of the fine oil, similar to that found in the chamber of *Hypocrisy*.

“On looking up to the pineal gland we found it strangely disproportioned by the prevailing bulk of the chamber of *Hypocrisy*. Contiguous to this, as if twin-preparations, was that of a courtier ; but being nothing dissimilar from the last, save in the circumstance of abounding more with refined oil in the great cavity of the heart, and its corresponding chamber in the pineal gland ; we passed on to a French preparation of the year 1789. Here all the chambers were uniform, and nearly equal in bulk, except that of *Credulity*, being very small.—The cavities of the heart were small, and its substance somewhat elastic. One additional circumstance was observable in this preparation, which was a small tube going off from the pineal gland, downwards towards the stomach, and expanding itself on the internal surface of that

that organ, whose office was to stimulate the whole gland in conjunction with the brain.— This stimulating principle arose from the active powers of a certain juice prevalent in the stomach in cases of hunger and want. The German and Spanish preparations were similar in the chamber of *Credulity*, possessing nearly the space of the whole gland. A Dutch preparation differed only from the last, in the particular of being more yellow, especially in the cavities of the heart and the pineal gland, a circumstance that confirmed me in opinion, that this colour is peculiar to the nature of a Dutchman.

“ A favourite dog of mine at this moment, no doubt conscious of my having exceeded my usual nap, set up a whining howl, which immediately awoke me in some confusion; but after a momentary recollection I found all a *Dream*.

“ NUGATOR.”

No. XIX.

No. XIX.

Thursday, October 1, 1795.

Fragments of the Journal of DEATH.

“Wait the great Teacher Death.”

POPE.

DOCTOR LAPWING lately presented me with a most extraordinary manuscript, which my facetious friend gravely assured me was a genuine Fragment of the Journal of DEATH; written by that awful hand which levels monarchs with the dust, hurls empires from their foundations, and converts the whole globe into one sepulchre. This precious literary relic was found by the parson under an ancient yew-tree, as he sat meditating among the tombs; and was probably dropped, accidentally, by his Majesty of Terrors in his flight,

flight, a few evenings ago, across the church-yard. Should the ghastly monarch amuse himself, occasionally, with reading the lucubrations of the Whisperer, before he finally consigns them to the library of Oblivion, he will hereby be informed where he may recover his strayed manuscript; which I thus publicly and solemnly promise to restore to the rightful owner, whenever his sable majesty shall condescend to demand it.

I entertain so high a veneration of Doctor Lapwing's character and veracity, that I durst not for a moment doubt the truth of his account, or the authenticity of this curious manuscript. I, therefor, asked no questions for conscience sake, but, me kly substituting faith for conviction, received the assertions of my orthodox friend for gospel: indeed, he anticipated all my enquiries before they were made, silenced m doubt before the existed, and confuted all my objections before I attempted to advance them. The manuscript is written on fine transparent vellum, which the Doctor proved by an host of physical and philosophical arguments, to be human skin, peculiarly prepared

pared for the purpose. The characters are large, rude and misshapen; but my ingenious friend, who wears spectacles, and sees with the microscopic eye of an antiquarian besides, as clearly discovers in every stroke the resemblance of bones, as an astronomer views seas, rivers and mountains in the moon; commas he proves to be fingers and toes, full points are skulls, and every letter represents some of the bones of a skeleton, which he arranges and combines with marvellous skill and facility. The ink, in general, is of a pale yellow or rusty brown colour: the early pages are grown so dim, that the characters are nearly obliterated, but those of a later date wear a more fresh and ruddy complexion: from these phenomena the Doctor concludes that the whole is written in *blood*.

I listen and admire in silence, while the eloquent Doctor wastes his lungs in preaching on this venerable text; on which he lavishes more learning and logic than upon the most dark and inexplicable passage in Scripture: indeed, his reasoning on this subject is so subtle, that I
could

could more easily check the career of the wind than resist its force; and his arguments are no less incontrovertible than they are incomprehensible.

The manuscript begins and ends abruptly, containing no connected narrative; but merely consisting of a series of anecdotes and observations oddly jumbled together, like the links of a broken chain, without order or method.—Some of the leaves are entirely wanting, others torn, blotted or mildewed; with frequent blanks, stars and dashes interspersed throughout the whole. From this crude chaos of materials, which my readers, no doubt, already conceive to be an invaluable cabinet of curiosities, I shall occasionally select a few remarkable extracts for their entertainment and instruction. The following I present for this week's amusement.

“ One—two—three!————Ha! a pause!
—four—five—six!————Again!”——The
sage physician shook his awful head, and the
powder fell from his wig, like snow from the
P shivering

shivering hawthorn, into the ghastly face of the patient. "Have you made your will, Sir?" interrogated the learned doctor, pulling out his golden time-piece, and casting an ominous look towards the window. The morosyllable "Yes" vibrated between the patient's quivering lips. "Have you made your peace with God?" again rejoined the doctor, in a voice deep as a funeral knell, and returning his watch into his fob. A black cloud passed over every countenance as he pronounced these solemn words: the wife, the children, and the relatives of the dying man hid their faces with their handkerchiefs, and began to sob aloud; they soon burst out, and shook the chamber with an hurricane of lamentations. The sufferer alone seemed unconcerned: he raised his head from the pillow, fixed his fading eyes upon the doctor, and gently pressing his hand on his bosom, an empty shell, which never bore the kernel of an honest heart! he whispered, in sinking accents: "Sir! I have had the honour to live a gentleman in this world, and hope to be treated with politeness in the next!" As the last word expired on his tongue, I broke the golden

golden bowl and loosed the silver cord. His soul, which was one of the least I ever beheld, I carefully consigned to a trusty page, with positive orders to convey it to the genteelest lodgings in my subterranean palace.

“ N. B. His lady was inconsolable during his illness: the moment his eyes were sealed in death she dried her tears; and, leaving the care of his funeral to the servants, reconciled herself to the loss of one husband by marrying another, before the former was cold in his grave.——

☞ I shall smite her soon.

“ As I flew out of this gentleman's window, I chanced to cast mine eyes towards the east, and, perceiving an immense multitude of people assembled on the coast of Malabar, I glanced away, swift as the light of the morning, to the place: where, as I hovered in the air, I beheld mighty preparations for the sacrifice of a young widow, who was going to immolate herself, that she might accompany the ghost of her husband, whom I had lately visited, on his journey to Mahomet's paradise. When all things

things were in readiness, and the corpse of her late spouse had been placed on the funeral pile, the lovely victim was led forth by the Bramins: a soft melancholy dimmed the lustre of her downcast eyes, and spread a faint cloud over her beauteous countenance. All gazed in silence: she approached the fatal altar: she paused—and gently lifting her tearful, trembling eyes towards me, a sigh, a soft pathetic sigh, stole from her palpitating heart. I was melted with compassion, and felt the full force of beauty, all-eloquent, in distress! 'Twas the first time I ever spared a victim since the creation—for the first time Death relented! Casting mine eyes around, I saw the Angel of thunder, borne on the chariot of the whirlwind, all wrapt in clouds and tempests, grasping ten thousand arrowy lightnings in his hand. To him I beckoned; and, pointing to the scene of murder, just as the enthusiastic Bramins were assisting the trembler to mount the funeral pile, the mighty Angel bent his bow, and, discharging his fiery darts, amid a crash of thunder that shook earth, air and ocean, struck the fanatic priests all black and lifeless on the spot. The
multitude

multitude stood aghast one moment; but hail, wind and lightning assailing them, they fled like deer before the hunters; and the fortunate widow escaped to the cottage of her parents among the mountains.

“ P. S. The priests, in all ages and all nations, have been my faithful journeymen: I am uncertain whether doctors themselves have done me greater services!

No. XX.

Thursday, October 8, 1795.

Fragments of the Journal of DEATH.

(CONTINUED.)

The Blessings of the Gaming Table.

* * * * "HAVING an engagement to spend a jovial evening at a celebrated gaming table, kept by a priestess of Venus, at the west end of the capital of Great Britain, I relieved, with all convenient expedition, many thousands of my patients, in various parts of mine empire, from the cares and vexations of life: and having laboured, with indefatigable diligence, till I had anticipated at least six hours work, I gave the world and myself a breathing,
and,

and, during the interval, posted away to the place of my assignation.

“ Here I found a brilliant congregation of Lords and Ladies, a curious species of non-descript animals, of ambiguous breed, distinguished from the common herd of my subjects by the elegant dissipation of their lives, the polished hypocrisy of their manners, and the delicate debility of their persons. They have carried their vices to such an exquisite pitch of refinement, that they wear the resemblance of virtues ; they have softened adultery into gallantry, and melted down murder into an affair of honour : the seduction of beauty, the ruin of innocence, recommend a young nobleman for ever to the favours of the fair sex ; while the lady, who hath wit enough to make a cuckold of her spouse and a prostitute of herself, commands the adoration of every husband beside her own. In a few words, to sum up their character, as a species, elevated in their own opinion far above the level of mankind, they sin with so charming a grace, lie with such amiable sincerity, and
break

break every law of God and Nature, with such easy pliability of heart and tender sensibility of soul, that humanity, benevolence, and all the simple virtues, when they happen to mingle with their more fashionable accomplishments, appear rather to shade than to illumine their characters. Their consciences, which they have taught to become no less polite than themselves, are too well bred ever to reproach them for their faults: no gentleman can forgive an insult, and if conscience itself were to whisper an unwelcome truth in his ear, his Honour would instantly challenge it into the field. In such a duel poor conscience would probably be silenced for ever! Such, throughout the whole globe, is the general character of the GREAT; but, to this rule, there are some illustrious exceptions even in Britain:—they shall be nameless *here*: but history shall snatch their memories from my obliterating hand, and engrave their virtues on the column of immortality!

“ Taking my stand on the pinnacle of a pretty painted fire screen, I surveyed, with mingled emotions of pity and chagrin, the
splendid

splendid spectacle around me. The company were divided into five parties, all amusing themselves with cards at separate tables; round which they shone like so many constellations of terrestrial stars, each little luminary twinkling in all the lustre of his respective rank and magnitude. Frail stars of human creation! whose beams are dwindling into darkness, whose flame consumes itself; ere long I will shake you from your spheres; the meteors that blaze in palaces shall set in the grave; the pride of nobility shall lie undistinguished in the dust!

“ To me, whose piercing eye can penetrate the secrets of the invisible world, the scene was at once mournful and ridiculous. While I smiled at the follies, I wept over the miseries of mankind: what pitiful slaves to their own most pitiful passions, these boasted free agents, these self-elected lords of creation are! Around them swarmed innumerable fiends, in a thousand horrible shapes, rapacious as vultures and cruel as tygers. Among these I distinguished Malice, Rage, Revenge, Avarice, Hypocrisy, and others equally malignant. The melancholy

imps.

imps of Care, Disappointment, Anguish and Solicitude likewise appeared busily employed in stinging and tormenting the company in every quarter of the room. But, above all, that execrable hag Envy seemed to triumph and enjoy every detestable gratification of her soul: she changed her form every moment: I saw her wind, like a serpent, round the neck of a lovely girl, and strangle her, till the features of an angel were distorted into the wildness of a fury: then instantly transforming herself into a toad, she leaped upon an artificial nosegay blooming in the dry bosom of a prude, and diverted herself with spitting her venom in the faces of all the company round her. But her principal delight was to whisper in the ear of Scandal, who sat in the corner of the room minuting down the conversation of the evening to be retailed in other circles, for the amusement of tea-tables, the discouragement of virtue, and the propagation of falsehood!

“ Here also shone Fashion, in all her glory, the goddess of the scene; whose votaries live upon her smiles, and worship her in their garments

ments rather than in their hearts: their own persons are the altars on which they offer up the splendid sacrifice of wigs, hats, buttons, silk, muslin, gold lace, jewels, and all the gorgeous paraphernalia of dress and equipage!—Indeed, on this occasion Fashion had disguised her lovers in such a dazzling variety of fantastic colours and figures, that my gravity and my patience never experienced so severe a trial before, and both threatened, every moment, to desert me: it was, therefore, with the greatest difficulty I restrained either my laughter or my indignation.

Folly, in full feather, sailed like a butterfly round the candles, and viewed, with the tender complacency of a mother, this hopeful groupe of her children. I blushed to see her cowering with her wings over the consecrated head of a prelate, and, immediately afterwards, fluttering on the fan of a coquette!

“ Her sister, Vanity, was no less frolicksome and diverting: one moment she lighted on the little finger of a judge, to admire the brilliant

in

in his ring; then skipping away with the nimbleness of a grasshopper, she kissed the patch on the chin of a dowager countess, played with the ruffles of an old banker, and took snuff with a nabob who carried the fleece of an empire on his shoulders: but the long, lank nose of a pert young coxcomb, who affected to be short sighted, seemed her favourite hobby-horse; for she frequently mounted it in the form of a pair of spectacles, and rode till the stripling's eyes were almost blind with following her. Among her female votaries, I particularly noticed one blooming beauty, who had so artfully concealed the wrinkles of sixty winters under an exquisite *portrait* of a nymph of seventeen, that I really did not recognise my old friend Lady Greycap in her *new face*.— From carmine she had borrowed the complexion of May; cream of violets lent her innocence, and rouge blushed for modesty on her cheeks. An unlucky incident, however, soon undeceived me: one of the pasteboard knaves robbed her of fifty guineas; and, by this uncivil trick, poor Lady Greycap lost both the game and her temper. Immediately a cataract of gutturals rattled

rattled from her lips; which so terribly disconcerted her teeth that they unanimously leaped out of her mouth upon the table! Smit with unspeakable consternation, she snatched up the two precious rows (formed out of the ivory spoils of an elephant) and put them in her pocket, though not before the company were aware of her misfortune: that instant her lovely auburn tresses took fire at the candle; but she instinctively discharged the blazing ringlets from the premises of her head (for, like her teeth, they were only tenants at will,) threw them into the ashes, and exposed the nakedness of her poll to the derision of all the guests. Heavens! what a peal of merriment resounded through the room! Unconscious of my presence, they laughed as if death were *dead*, and human life immortal!

“ My time being nearly elapsed, I singled out two victims for my prey. The first was a man, the possessor of immense wealth; a proud, avaricious wretch, whom I had long suffered to live the torment of himself and of all who had the misfortune to know him.—

Q

The

The other was a female, whom nature had graced with matchless beauty, but whom cards had metamorphosed into an hag: pale, thin and withered, her eyes glared with anxiety, her cheeks were blasted by disappointment, her forehead ploughed with care. Ill-fated fair one! her husband was a wealthy, thriving merchant: but she played him first into the Gazette, and then into prison; from whence, with my compassionate assistance, he happily escaped into the grave! Her sons, deprived of their father and deserted by their mother, betook themselves to the highway; and, for their dexterity in levying contributions on travellers, were sent, by the justice of their country, to colonize New Holland. Her daughters, poor ghosts of beauty! haunt the streets of the city, and are seen, like spectres, only in the dusk of evening or under the guilt-concealing canopy of night.

“ These were my chosen victims. The great man had been unsuccessful the whole evening; but his losses only rendered him more sanguine, and he plunged, with some other desperadoes,

desperadoes, into the gulph of deep play to indemnify himself, I watched him closely, and conveyed into his hands all the cards which Fortune had marked for success. In half an hour he found himself master of all the gold on the table. Flushed with victory, he swept the glittering treasure into his purse, and departed home. I pursued him, and entered his house at his heels. He flew to the chamber of his lady—'twas bolted—he burst it open with his foot, and surprised the wife of his bosom entertaining herself with the broken English of his French valet. Rapt, at once, in a whirlwind of jealousy, he seized the blooming Adonis by the throat, and would have strangled him on the spot, had not the Gallant, with admirable dexterity (at my suggestion) snatched the husband's own sword from his side, and sheathed it in his heart. I wrung out his soul, and advised the lovers to escape to France.—They took my counsel and fled: I shall pursue them at my leisure.

“ Meanwhile, I returned to the gaming-table to conduct the lady, of whom I was
exceedingly

exceedingly enamoured, to her everlasting home. On her Fortune had frowned; and just as I entered she staked and lost her last guinea.—She arose in an agony of despair. She paused in the street: a moment's reflection awoke all the scorpions of her conscience—they stung her soul to madness. Her two daughters passed by their mother: their eyes glared with unhallowed flames—oaths polluted their lips—and the mockery of paint, in vain, repaired the ruins of beauty on their cheeks.—“Good night!” said they, and vanished among the croud of prostitutes. “Good night!” exclaimed the distracted mother. “Oh, my orphans! I murdered your father! my example ruined you! God of everlasting mercies! if the tears, the prayers, the agonies of a Magdalen, and a mother of Magdalens, can move Thy compassion, O save my miserable daughters! This night—this guilty night—shall expiate—no!—it shall fill up the measure of my crimes!—My poor, lost girls!—good night!—an everlasting good night!” So saying, she flew like a lunatic through the streets till she had reached the margin of the Thames. The moon broke in

in splendour from a canopy of clouds: her silver lustre trembled on the curling waters: my victim looked into the stream:—her own pale, wild, distorted visage glared upon her in the liquid mirror. She started—paused—returned, and looked again: again the livid Spectre rose to meet her view: she mistook the image of her own face for mine! My voice howled in the wind: she heard the awful summons. “I come!” she cried to the phantom in the flood; and threw herself into its extended arms. I caught her in mine, and wafted her down the river to the shore of immortality!

Q.

Q. 2

No. XXI.

No. XXI.

Thursday, October 15, 1795.

The Siege of the Cottage.

“**A**NGELS and ministers of Grace, defend us!” exclaimed Doctor Lapwing, the other evening, as Mr. Jonathan Starlight solemnly entered the parlour, at the parsonage, where my friends and I were amusing ourselves with tobacco smoke and criticism.

Jonathan started, and looked—not like Hamlet’s Ghost—but like Hamlet’s Son, when he saw it.

“How

“ How long have you been dead, Jonathan ?”
enquired the Doctor.

“ I buried myself last Saturday night—in
my study ; and this is the first hour of my re-
surrection !”

“ The moment you entered, Jonathan !
I perceived the maggots had been at you.”

“ True, Doctor ! my brains have been all
alive and kicking these three days !”

“ Jupiter’s pate was brought to bed of Pallas,
and Satan’s of Sin ; and, if the *fables* say true,
the Ladies sprang to light full grown, and all
accomplished both in mind and person. Pray,
what may thy prolific cranium have produced,
friend Jonathan ?”

“ Twins ! Doctor ! Twins ! to whom com-
pared your Sins and your Minervas were mice,
produced by mountains.”

“ Well

“ Well spoken ! Son of Apollo !—but what fort of twins hath *your* mountain in labour brought forth ?—a pair of elephants, or a pair of boots ? ”

“ A pair of old Women ! Doctor ! ”

“ Upon my honour, Jonathan ! thou hast indeed out done both Jupiter and the Devil !—thy Daughters are come into the world in their dotage, which is a step beyond maturity ! As they have been born in *second* childhood, I presume they intend to die in their *first* :—their lives, like a crab’s gait or a witch’s prayer, will be retrograde ; instead of growing older every day, they will grow younger every night.—But come, Jonathan ! let us see thy infants ! ”

“ Here they are, swaddled in cartridge paper, and bandaged with tape : ”

“ I’ll be a dry nurse, and Mr. Silvertongue a man-step-mother, to the poor little innocents ! ” said the Doctor, untying the parcel, which contained—not two old Women—but

two

two sheets of paper ; on which was transcribed a Poem of considerable length.

“ Jonathan !” continued the Doctor, when he discovered the Poetry ; “ as thy babes have had the misfortune to be born in their old age, I hope they will live for ever ;—old age is the infancy of immortality.”

Doctor Lapwing then, at the request of the company, with great gravity, and in a clear, audible and majestic tone of voice, read the following Tale:—

THE

THE
SIEGE OF THE COTTAGE:

A GRAND

Display of Modern Heroism.

WHERE royal Severn swells the sea
With his majestic flood,
Beneath the shadow of a rock
A tiny Cottage stood.

The walls were mud, and thatch the roof,
And earth's cold lap the floor;
The light came in, the smoke went out,
Like neighbours, at the door.

Here lived, by honest industry,
And eke by scolding too,
A brace of Widows grim and old,
A Gossip and a Shrew.

Kate's

Kate's tongue had worn out all her teeth,
With prating night and day ;
It ran such lengths, methinks 'tis strange
It never ran away.

Peggy's dread engine never deigned
To crack a trifling joke ;
But hoarse, tremendous and profound,
In guttural thunder spoke.

Such were the fair, illustrious Dames,
Whose Castle once was stormed
By Winter's hideous train—who thus
The tragedy performed.

The sun, who loved the charming Cot,
Had ta'en his leave in smiles,
And just set fail to spend the night
In Otaheite's isles.

The full moon, laughing in the east,
Unveiled her jolly face,
And led the stars a merry dance
Through everlasting space.

Pale Winter, breathing spleen and frost,
Was prowling o'er the plain
In search of lodgings for the night,
But all his search was vain.

Where'er he went the doors were locked,
The window-bolts were shot ;
And flaming fires, like flaming swords,
Defended every cot.

The shivering Sage, whose reverend brows
Were white with snows and cares,
Was muffled in the shaggy spoils
Of ten Norwegian bears.

His eyes, distilling rheum and blood,
Were lanterned in his head ;
His pate was bald, his cankered cheeks
With horrid scurvy spread.

His nose leaned o'er his toothless jaws,
Like carrot red and long ;
Prone from its peak, an icicle,
White as a parsnip, hung.

His

His beard and whiskers, huge and wild,
Were big with hoary fate,
And scattered hail, and frost, and fleet,
Whene'er he shook his pate.

His feet were shod with wooden clogs,
And, in his sovereign hand,
He grasped a tall, uprooted oak,
His sceptre of command.

Thus wandering pensive on the shore,
And scowling far and wide,
Secure beneath its guardian rock,
The snug, warm cot he spied.

Here, through the key-hole peeping fly,
He viewed the withered pair,
Wrapt up in blankets, and in sleep,
Not dreaming he was there:

Then Envy, through his tortured veins,
Her rankling poison spread ;
So felt the Devil, when he saw
Adam and Eve in bed.

He stormed, he stamped, he cursed, and swore
To dash the Cottage down,
And, by the death of two old Hags,
To win immense renown.

Then, with a gallant leap, the Sage
A nimble cloud bestrode ;
And, northward on his flying steed,
Through heaven sublimely rode.

He quickly reached a Castle, hewn
From ice congealed to stone,
Whose ramparts threw a twilight shade
O'er half the Arctic Zone.

'Twas built, amid the frantic sea,
Upon the frozen pole;
And walled with adamantine rocks,
The billows to controul.

From Ocean's cradle to the stars
The mansion towered on high,
Like Pelion on Olympus piled,
When Titans stormed the sky.

The

The Sage approached, when, lo ! the doors
Of this sublime abode,
Threw wide their hospitable arms ;
And in the Hero strode.

Big, blustering Boreas here he found,
The master of the seat ;
Who, with a splendid feast, that night
His Brother Winds did treat.

Around a stormy sea of punch,
Within a mighty vat,
At table, wide as Paul's Church Yard,
The swilling Giants sat.

Tobacco pipes, like leaden spouts,
With right good will they smoked,
While, throned like Gods among the clouds,
They sang, and laughed, and joked.

With double dewlaps, plump and round
Their pimpled faces shone ;
Their wigs were full as spreading trees,
When all their leaves are on.

Their

Their beards resembled northren lights,
That all dishevelled glare;
And, when they drank, they swelled their cheeks
Like big balloons in air.

When Winter entered, all arose,
And bowed before their King;
And he, to them, did condescend
To do the self-same thing.

Then, seated in an elbow chair,
“ He swig’d the flowing can;”
And coughing thrice—thrice hemming—blew.
His nose—and thus began.

“ Ye Vassal Potentates ! who rule
“ Mine empire of the air !
“ Now for a most tremendous deed,
“ A deed of death, prepare.

“ There is a Cottage, in the south,
“ Where dwell two poor old Hags,
“ Blest—curse the witches !—doubly blest
“ With happiness and rags !

“ This

“ This Cot I’ll storm with all my power ;
“ These Hags annihilate :
“ For by this bowl of punch I swear,
“ And what I swear is fate !”

This awful oath to sign and seal,
The jolly bowl he took,
And, having sworn by that, the Sage
Devoutly kissed the book !

The Winds, who relished oaths and punch,
Now swallowed both amain ;
They swore and kissed, and kissed and swore,
Then swore and kissed again.

“ Here endeth the first Lesson, appointed for this evening’s service”—said Doctor Lapwing, laying down the manuscript;—“ and, before we proceed on the Campaign against the Cottage, we will lay in a stock of provisions at the Victualling Office, alias the Supper Parlour.”

V.

No. XXII.

Thursday, October 22, 1795.

The Siege of the Cottage.

(CONCLUDED.)

“ JONATHAN !” said Doctor Lapwing, resuming the manuscript after supper ; “ thy Pegasus hath taken such a wildgoose flight, that I fear his brain will grow giddy with elevation.”

“ You will find him just now at his meridian, Doctor !” replied Jonathan ; “ in the course of a few lines he will begin to descend.”

“ Perpendicularly !

“ Perpendicularly ! I presume :—but let us not judge too hastily of thy performance,” returned the Doctor. He then read the Continuation of the “ Siege of the Cottage,” as follows.

NOW Boreas, from their dens, unchained
The Dæmons of the Storms,
In shapes of dragons, bears and wolves,
Ten thousand hideous forms !

Whirlwinds and vapours issued forth ;
Dread Darkness, following soon,
Blind-folded all the winking stars,
And masked the staring moon.

High in a black balloon of clouds,
Red meteors glaring round,
All cloathed with horror, Winter rode
Amid the gloom profound.

Spirits of Ocean, fire and air,
Pursued his awful flight,
Shrieked through the pauses of the blast,
And scared the coward night.

The Cottage soon appeared in view ;
Each Wind assumed his place ;
While Boreas bellowed at its back,
Auster annoyed its face.

Eurus and Zephyr, counter sides,
Assailed with equal force ;
Instead of throwing down the house,
They held it up of course !

Sooner than storm the Fortrefs thus,
In spite of Nature's laws,
Each might have blown his windy brains
Into his brother's jaws !

As if an host of elephants
Should march in martial form,
With towers and armies on their backs,
A spider's web to storm !

So looked the formidable train,
Around the little Cottage,
Which seemed to say, " Poor fellows, spare
" Your breath to cool your pottage !"

Winter, who viewed the siege from high,
As snug as mouse in cheese ;
Now rose in wrath, and, by the roots,
Uptore a dozen trees.

Therewith a besom huge he formed,
And plunging in the flood,
Black from the bed of Ocean roused
Mountains of rolling mud.

The foaming waves, with matchless might,
He troubled to and fro,
Till sweat rained down his frozen face,
And thawed his beard of snow.

Then with his besom he began
To deluge all the shore ;
But every billow swooned away
Before the Cottage door.

Boreas.

Boreas, meanwhile, upon the rock,
Proved a more fatal foe;
With school-boy skill the Giant formed
A mighty ball of snow.

Then with a blast, that burst his cheeks,
He hurled it from aloof;
Headlong the groaning mountain fell
Plumb on the Cottage roof.

Yet still it stood, though buried deep
Beneath the whelming load;
Some guardian Angel held it up,
Who loved the snug abode.

" 'Tis done !" exulting Boreas cried,
And shook his ruffled head ;
" 'Tis done !" his Brother Winds replied ;
" 'Tis done !" grim Winter said.

Then, with a magic spell of frost,
The Cottage tomb they sealed ;
And, laughing at the hapless Hags,
Triumphant left the field.

Besides

Besides our Ladies and their Cat,
Of crockery ware a lot,
A pair of panniers and an Afs,
Were buried in the Cot.

With these they used to travel far,
And live upon the spoil;
One drove the Afs, and one the trade,
Dividing thus the toil!

At eight next morn, the Dames awoke,
But turned and slept again;
The cuckoo in the clock rung nine,
They yawned, then snored till ten.

“ Lord! what a long, long night!” they cried;
Then bounced upon the floor:
“ The key-hole’s dark!” said Kate; “ Odds bobs!
“ The deuce is in the door!”

“ What! won’t it open?” Peg exclaimed;
“ Last night we said no prayers!
“ The D—l has ravished us!”——Quoth Kate,
“ And who the D—l cares?”

Now

Now Peg was like a tinder box ;
She instantly took fire ;
And stamping, till her tongue broke loose,
Retorted thus in ire.

“ Atheist ! and Infidel ! and Imp !
“ With fins and giblets crammed ;
“ As sure as we’re alive and well,
“ So sure we’re dead and d——d !”

“ What ! dead ?” cried unbelieving Kate ;
“ Yet laugh, and scold, and walk ?”
“ Knave ! Fool ! and Blockhead !” answered Peg ;
“ These are our souls that talk !

“ Our bodies now, in some church-yard,
“ Are snugly gone to bed”——
“ Hold !” interrupted Kate ; “ Have souls
“ An handle to their head ?”

She said ; and, with no gentle tweak,
Surprised poor Peggy’s snout :
The latter tore the assailant’s hair,
And boxed her ears about.

As if two comets, all on fire,
Should rush to battle big,
And, with exterminating rage,
Each other's pates unwig.

So tooth and nail the matrons fought,
When, terrible to tell!
Full loud, beneath their stamping feet,
The Cat began to yell.

Swearing revenge, with bitter oaths,
Pufs bounced upon the shelf;
Where many a frail utensil shone,
Of earthen ware and delf.

Down, with tremendous crash, at once,
Came pitchers, plates, and all;
When earthquakes and old women rage,
Tea-pots and towns must fall!

Like thunder, on the Warriors' skulls,
The crockery ruins fell;
Prostrate they sunk, convinced at heart,
Their portion was in hell!

With cups and faucers, legs and arms,
The dismal floor was spread;
Bottles, alas ! and heads were broke,
And blood and brandy shed.

And now the frantic Cat assailed
The Matron's honest Afs,
Who in an halter soundly slept,
With all his thoughts at grass.

Roused from a dear, delicious dream,
By fell Grimalkin's claws,
Jack started up, and opened wide
His eyes, and eke his jaws !

O ! what a wild, melodious air,
The sweet Musician sung !
Rocks might have listened with delight,
And broomsticks blest his tongue.

Then, on the light, fantastic hoof,
He nimbly tript about ;
Nor ceased to caper, and to bray,
Till Pufs released his snout.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile the Dames had raised their bones,
And, though they felt them sore,
Yet both most piously believed
That they were bones no more !

To bed they crawled, with fancies full
Of fiends with wings and scales ;
Hobgoblins grim, with saucer eyes,
And hoofs, and horns, and tails !

Full fifty hours, in deep despair,
And deep in snow they lay ;
When, lo ! their neighbours and the sun
Restored the Hags to day !

Hope through the key-hole gaily glanced,
They hailed the smiling beam ;
Rushed from the grave ;—and death and hell
Departed like a dream !

Thus, at the birth of Father Time,
Two sisters, robed in light,
NATURE and BEAUTY burst sublime
From Tartarus and Night. *

“ Verily,

“ Verily, friend Jonathan !” said Doctor Lapwing, as he laid down the manuscript; “ the last verse hath saved thy poem from the flames.”

“ Surely, Doctor ! you would not have burned my amiable daughters for witchcraft !”

“ I should only have visited the sins of their father on them.”

“ I understand you, Doctor ! my poem is execrable.”

“ It is too long, Jonathan !”

“ Too long !—why ?—it originally consisted of an hundred and fifty stanzas; one half of which were pruned away before I presumed to submit it to the censure of Doctor Lapwing !”

“ Thou art too much in the habit of doing things only by *halves* !—thou shouldst have completed

completed the good work of retrenchment while thine hand was in !”

“ I should then, indeed, have made *nothing* of it !”——

——“ Which is better than making “ Much ado about nothing !”

“ The latter was my design, Doctor !”

“ I congratulate thee on thy success ;—
“ Great cry and little wool” ought to be the motto of thy poem.”

“ The subject sinks, and the powers of a Milton could not support it with dignity to the conclusion.”

“ Then a Milton would never have chosen so sinking a subject. It is one of the grandest characteristics of Genius, to select such themes only, for the exercise of its powers, as are worthy of its amazing capacity. Like the arrow of Aescles, which sprang from the im-

pulse of the bow, took fire in its flight, and vanished in the immensity of heaven; * so Genius, in its excursions, rises with majesty, kindles in its career, and marks its path by the increasing splendour of its train, the magnificence of its coruscations, and the awful sublimity of its ascent. Thy muse, Jonathan! on the contrary, generally takes wing with a portion of spirit and velocity that astonishes sober criticism, but languishing, in her progress, she gravitates into dulness, or bursts into bombast, before she has completed one half of her course. The snuff of thy taper smokes in the candlestick long after the blaze hath expired!"

"Clap your extinguisher over it, Doctor!" cried the Poet, rising in a glow of passion, and wishing the rest of the company—"Good night!"

"Might

*Namque volans liquidis in nubibus arsit arundo,
Signavitque viam flammis, tenuisque recessit
Consumpta in ventos.*

Virg. Æneid. Lib. 8.

“ Might you not have been less severe on our young friend ?” said I to Doctor Lapwing, when Jonathan had retired.

“ Yes—if I had chosen to be less just :” answered the Doctor.

“ But your censure was altogether unqualified.”

“ If I had mingled one drop of honey among the gall, it would have intoxicated him. I love the lad too well to praise him before his face, or ridicule him behind his back.”

“ But I am sorry to see him offended.”

“ And I am glad. He is gone home meditating poetical vengeance : my censure has stung him to the quick ; but he is too vain to acknowledge, even to his own heart, that he has merited it. I could read, in the keen transparency of his eye, the magnanimous resolution, which he has already formed, to compel me to render homage to his insulted genius :—

“ *Though*

“ Though I have done my best this time, I will do better the next !” he seemed to say as he shut the door ; and, depend upon it, Silvertongue ! about the next full moon, Jonathan’s muse will be in the straw again !”

It was now late, and I immediately returned home, admiring equally the vanity of poets and the pride of critics !

V..

No. XXIII.

No. XXIII.

Thursday, October 29, 1795.

THE CHIMERA ;
OR,
A TALE OF A LOOKING GLASS.

" Monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens!"

VIRGIL.

" A monster, tremendous, and huge, and deformed!"

EXTRA VAGANT and absurd as the following tale may appear, the inquisitive reader may be assured, that the fact is as well authenticated as the finest fables in Grecian mythology, which were so piously believed by the most learned and polished people of antiquity.

There

There was a certain principality, in the land of Gotham, the inhabitants of which were very ugly, very ignorant, and very proud: they regarded themselves as beings of a nature superior to men, and looked down upon the rest of the species as animals, debased as much below, as they were exalted above, the standard of humanity! Among other whimsical peculiarities of person, this sagacious tribe had an unlucky defect in the organs of vision, which prevented them from discerning any object distinctly, till, with the dexterity of an astronomer directing his telescope to a star, they had caught it in a certain point of view. It is sufficient that, as a faithful historian, I record this curious fact, and leave, to the ingenious compilers of philosophical transactions, the more difficult task of explaining and accounting for so strange an imperfection in the visual nerves of a whole generation of their brethren.

This principality was governed by laws of its own: among these I shall only mention one, for which, as for every other foolish law, there were,

were, no doubt, very wise reasons, though I have never been able to discover them, whereby it was enacted, that no inhabitant of the said principality should, on pain of the loss of both his eyes, either purchase or receive, have or hold in his or her possession, any looking-glass, mirror, piece of polished metal or glazed earthen ware, whatsoever. This law was so religiously observed, that at length both the meaning and the word, Looking-glass, became obsolete : and, though the statute was regularly promulged and universally acknowledged as the most salutary restriction under heaven, yet no two lawyers in the land could agree concerning the sense of it. Some contended, that it was an act for the discouragement of adultery, and others a decree for the abolition of witchcraft ; a third maintained, that it forbade sabbath-breaking, while a fourth as learnedly demonstrated that it was an injunction against drinking small beer. But, though every individual was his own interpreter of this mysterious law, yet the whole nation would have risen, to a man, to punish the presumption of any one, who

who durst have doubted, whether it had any meaning at all !

Now it came to pass, in process of time, that a certain nobleman, from a quarter of the world where looking-glasses were held in as pure veneration as they are at this day—in a lady's dressing room,—established his residence within this famous principality. Having heard of this extraordinary law, and the amusing controversies concerning its import, his lordship resolved to indulge a vein of pleasantry at the expence of his neighbours. For this purpose, he furnished one of the noblest apartments in his house with large mirrors, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, so that the walls being entirely concealed, the room appeared immense, and reflected the spectator's image on every side. A card was then circulated, inviting a pie-bald groupe of the most eccentric characters in the principality, to sup with his lordship on the following evening.

At

At the appointed time, the guests attended, with more devotion and punctuality than ever they assembled at church. The entertainment was sumptuous, and the wines were exquisite. When his lordship observed, that his guests began to grow merry and mellow, he rose, and, with great gravity, informed them, that he had just imported, from a very distant country, the most singular monster that ever fables feigned, or fear conceived. This wonderful animal he had confined in an apartment above; and any lady or gentleman present were very welcome to gratify themselves with a sight of it: but, for certain private reasons, he could not permit more than one person to be introduced into its presence at once, otherwise consequences the most unpleasant might ensue.

While all the company were clamourously expressing their impatience and curiosity; each contending for the priority of admission to the monster; Parson Squintum—a divine of such amazing corporeal capacity, that he seemed to carry his parish under his waistcoat—solemnly rose, demanded silence, and thus addressed the

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master

master of the house:—"My lord! I do opine that it may be most expedient for me to see this monster first; lest, peradventure, it should prove to be the Great Red Dragon, who hath assumed a vehicle of flesh and blood to frighten the tender lambs of my flock, who ought to have the fear of God, and not the fear of Satan, before their eyes!"

His lordship bowed approbation, and immediately conducted the parson up one flight of stairs to the door, and then, leaving him, returned to his company. Squintum, who had read Agrippa on Occult Philosophy, paused, repeated certain mysterious words, which had more virtue in them than was to be found in his whole parish, then solemnly put forth his hand, and opened the door. But who can paint his terror when he beheld—for his reverence saw ninefold—the grim chimeras that glared on every side! Though only the multiplied reflections of his own amiable image, the parson was so dreadfully disconcerted, that, without staying to shut the door, he thundered down stairs, averring, by all the powers of light and darkness,

darkness, that he had encountered a legion of devils; among whom he could clearly distinguish Belzebub and Belial, Mammon and Lucifer!

“Z——ds!” cried Squire Crambo; “a Parson! and afraid of the Devil!” He spake, and reeled towards the stair-case; which he ascended with great difficulty, hickupping and staggering at every step, for his feet and his head felt a wonderful inclination to exchange places. At length, he scaled the top, and manœuvred his way to the door: here he leaned, and, after many a zigaag tactic with his maudlin eyes, contrived to fix them on a bloated figure in the glass before him. But scarcely had he seen the monster, when a sober paleness bleached his countenance; back he recoiled, and chose the shortest way down stairs, to the imminent peril of his neck. There, on the stony floor, he lay extended, groaning and gasping for breath; while the sweat trickled from every pore of his face, like water down a window in a thunder shower. My lord, at length, arrived to his assistance; but the crest-fallen squire, grasping his knees, implored him

to

to order the servants to shut the mouth of Hell, or the Devil would devour him in a moment. Being assured that the monster was chained, he permitted the attendants to gather up his bones, and deposit them again in his chair; where his terrors were quickly evaporated in tobacco smoke.

“ I’ll do for him, and all the Imps in Christendom !” cried Brag, with a throat as loud, and almost as wide, as a cannon’s ; who, because one of his ancestors—an antediluvian according to tradition—was the mightiest warrior of his age, most magnanimously imagined himself an hero likewise : and, lest the indiscriminating million should mistake his character, he always wore the grim *insignia* of the military order—a scarlet coat, a fierce cocked hat, and trenchant blade, dangling at his side like a loose feather in a turkey’s wing. Signs of courage !—signs indeed !—and so are the Green Dragon, and the Blue Boar, signs of—
“ Ale and Porter.”

“ I’ll

“ I’ll do for him !” repeated Brag; with a terrible frown ; at the same time, attempting, with all his might, to disengage his sword from the rusty embrace of its scabbard ; but the steel and the leather were so faithfully attached to each other, that all his efforts to separate them were ineffectual. He then grasped the weapon, sheathed as it was, and brandishing it with a formidable grace, stalked towards the stairs. Now, marshalling all the intrepidity of his tongue into his face, which, both in colour and substance, might claim affinity with brass, he began to ascend ; but, unluckily, in fortifying the outworks of his person, he left the citadel of his heart utterly unguarded. Of this lamentable error our hero became more and more sensible, when he felt, and even heard, the little coward in his bosom, beat quicker and shorter at every step which he took towards the fatal door ; but the moment he beheld that monster, of all monsters the most monstrous—SELF !—it made such a sudden revolution in his bowels, that even his friends below blushed for him. The servants instantly hastened to relieve him ; but it was long before

they could shake the hero into his senses, or carry him away from the field of disgrace.

Next rose a ghastly chymist, who rather resembled an emigrant ghost, which had broke prison and escaped from the grave, than a man. He was a tall, lean figure, with a narrow visage, and a pointed chin; diminutive in body, but legged like a pair of compasses. With three strides he reached the stair-case, and, with three more, the top: but, being in rather more haste to return, some authors assert, that he took only one stride back; but others, with more probability, affirm, that he made two steps, the one down stairs, the other to his seat; where he solemnly deposed, that he had seen a hobgoblin in the shape of a pair of tongs.

It would be too tedious to detail all the ridiculous observations, and contradictory reports, of those who went to peep at the monster; for not one had hitherto ventured to survey it leisurely; or the result of such a self-examination might have been a very unexpected discovery of the illusion. All, however, agreed, that it
was

was the most hideous and horrible of Chimeras. A witty lawyer vowed, that it was an enormous locust, brought, by some east-wind, to devour all his clients. A learned physician was of opinion, that the monster could be no other than Death, who had come, in person, to rob him of his patients. An hungry son of Apollo swore, that it was a Famine, which the God of Verse had just sent into the land, to punish the iniquity of the inhabitants, among whom a depraved taste for beef and pudding had turned every body's stomach against poetry : but a sagacious critic, that instant coming down stairs, shrewdly contradicted the bard, and proved, to a demonstration, that the monster was the Plague ! A grave alderman mistook himself, in the glass, for a tremendous turtle, reared on its unwieldy fins, and flouncing about to mimic humanity. A miserable old banker, whose bones were almost as threadbare as his coat, whose wealth was only a million, but his poverty unbounded, returned from the spectacle with a countenance equally terrified and terrifying, and while his few grey hairs bristled, and almost seemed to hiss, like
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the serpents of Medusa, about his head, declared, that the fiend above was some cormorant of a miser, who was come to rob and grind the poor, to snatch the morsel from the mouth of the orphan and the widow, and drive the whole parish to the work-house. So saying, he scampered home to secure his own mite.

I have hitherto foreborne to mention the opinions of the ladies present; several of whom, notwithstanding the dreadful colours in which the gentlemen had portrayed him, went to visit the monster. An antique damsel, who charmingly concealed the wrinkles of sixty winters under the blush of seventeen summers, fell into convulsions of envy, at the threshold of the door, the moment she saw the lovely reflection of her borrowed beauty in the glass; for she innocently mistook the image of her own artificial charms for the person of a rival, embellished with natural graces, intolerably young, and unpardonably handsome! However, when she returned from the visit, with all the candour and delicacy of a legitimate daughter of scandal, she represented the phantom which she

she had seen—not quite so brilliant as she imagined it—but just as youthful and as fascinating as she herself was in reality, and as she sincerely wished all her sex to be. Her testimony was duly credited—till contradicted by a pretty damsel!—who had been selected, like a flower among a wilderness of weeds, for the sake of hearing her opinion. She tripped down the stairs as nimbly as she had ascended them timidly, and gayly avowed, that she had seen and kissed a blessed angel; that she had asked it a thousand sweet questions, but it only answered by curtsies, and blushes and smiles; and though she fain would have caught the coy beauty in her arms, it constantly eluded her embrace, and seemed as impalpable as a spirit.

Now, when all the guests, in due rotation, had peeped at the Chimera, which, Proteus like, assumed a different form to every spectator; yet (the last recorded instance excepted) appeared equally frightful to each, they were most provokingly chagrined, and most unaccountably puzzled. At length, after a learned debate, they determined to sally forth, mount
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the stairs in a phalanx, assail the enemy in his den, and deliver the world of so formidable a plague.

His Lordship now saw and repented his folly too late! In vain he remonstrated with a multitude, so angry and so ignorant: he, therefore, prudently permitted them to seize the implements of cookery, and articles of furniture, which fell in their way. Being completely armed with weapons of this awful description—pokers and tongs, spits, shovels and gridirons—the Gothamites began their march up stairs, in silence and in terror; for their feet went slower and their pulses quicker, their breath shortened and their faces lengthened, at every step.

When they reached the landing-place, none durst enter the apartment. However, it was resolved, after a trembling consultation, in which their teeth chattered louder than their tongues, that they should all close their eyes, take hold of each others' arms, and thus storm the citadel of their adversary.—

Simple

Simple as the plan may appear, it sprang from the profoundest policy ; they were well assured, that the enemy was chained, yet, though there was no personal danger, not one could muster fortitude sufficient to face such a spectacle again, except in the presence of his friends ; and they fondly hoped to flash all the terrors, which they themselves felt, into the monster's breast, by opening upon him, at once, the artillery of an hundred pair of eyes !

With hesitation and difficulty, they executed this arduous plan ;—they entered the room ;—the signal was given—they opened their eyes !—and their eyes were indeed opened—for the whole mystery was revealed in a moment ! Confounded and silent they stood, gazing with horror and amazement on the images around them ; for each, by beholding the persons of his companions, reflected and multiplied in the mirrors, recognized his own !

An hurricane of rage succeeded the tranquillity of astonishment ; they flung their weapons at the walls, demolished the looking-glasses in the
the

the twinkling of an eye, then stamped on the ruins with all the bitterness of spite and the impotence of malice. But, before the unfortunate mirrors had entirely experienced the fate, to which monarchs and galley slaves must bow—before they were quite reduced to dust!—a sudden thought, like the power of electricity, flashed through the brains of the company, and now they appeared as eager to preserve, as they had been furious to destroy, the guilty glass! For, while our heroes were magnanimously trampling their enemies under their feet, and each ridiculing the hideous features of others, when they looked down on the floor, the natural wonderful sagacity of this sage people prompted the idea, that the disgraceful incident, which had taught them such unwelcome self-knowledge, might be improved into a very momentous advantage. Each gathered up as many of the largest fragments of the shivered mirrors as he could seize, and ran home with them, rejoicing as if he had found an inestimable treasure.

Now,

Now, reader, mark the ingenuity of the human mind, the benevolence of the human heart, and, above all, the accommodating pliability of the human conscience. By frequently contemplating their amiable visages in the looking-glasses, the Gothamites gradually became tolerable, then handsome, and at length beautiful, in their own eyes. But, in proportion as they grew enamoured of their own complexions, they sickened with increasing disgust at the ugliness of their neighbours. Whenever they wished to gratify the most delectable feelings, of which their bosoms were susceptible, they would sit down before their glasses, and meditate, with ineffable pleasure, on their imaginary charms. But the very vehicle which conveyed the most exquisite luxury to themselves, they wisely endeavoured to convert into an instrument of the severest mortification to others. When they were inclined to provoke any one, they instantly produced the mirror, and held it up in derision to his face; and, while the latter, with the sereneest complacency, was admiring the sweet, smiling features of the idol in the glass, the former was officiously

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ously pointing out its deformities, and ridiculing its grimaces: for, though each believed himself a blossom of beauty, and a model of perfection, none could conceive it possible, that his neighbour should be so blind and so infatuated as to entertain the same vanity.

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No. XXIV.

No. XXIV.

Thursday, November 5, 1795.

Norvan and Nila.

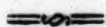
INDISPOSITION, from a very cordial visit of my family friend the gout, having prevented me from applying my attention to the subject of an essay for my Weekly Whisperer, I solicited my poetical friend, Mr. Jonathan Starlight, to supply me with a trifle in metre, for the amusement of my readers.

Jonathan, who is more eccentric than a comet, bluntly and peremptorily refused to comply with my request. I gravely begged pardon. Jonathan then condescended to offer an uncouth apology for his unaccommodating disposition; which I accepted with an air of the
most

most provoking complacency. Jonathan, who secretly hoped to be courted to compliance, was exceedingly mortified at my meek and magnanimous resignation, under so severe a disappointment as, he imagined, his refusal ought to have been to me. I perceived his chagrin, and immediately changed the topic of conversation. But the Poet was too uneasy to enter cordially into discourse. He alternately sunk into, and started from, momentary reveries; he walked with hasty and unequal pace about the room, chaffed his temples with his fingers, looked through the window with as much anxiety as the mother of Sifera, then sat down again and played with the chain of his watch, buttoned and unbuttoned his waistcoat, and exhibited a thousand other diverting pranks.—During this whimsical pantomime, he seemed to be conversing with me; and, I must acknowledge, his observations were as shrewd and intelligible as the language of those who talk in their sleep. At length, he contrived to effect his escape out of the room, in a very abrupt manner.

In

In the evening, as I expected, I received the following *Bagatelle*, inclosed in a blank sheet of paper. The story, as usual, is extravagant ; but my readers may, perhaps, find some indifferent entertainment in the perusal.



NORVAN AND NILA.



An African Tale.



ON the blooming banks of Niger,
Slumbering lay a beauteous tiger ;
Lightly whispering o'er his head,
Waved a broad palmetto-shade ;
Murmuring music in his ear,
Rippling ran the river clear ;
While the sun, with splendour bright,
Like an eagle in his flight,
Borne upon the wings of time,
Towered in majesty sublime,

Earth and ocean, air and sky,
Basking in his boundless eye !

Soft as evening dew distills
Down the green declining hills,
Came a lovely negro maid,
Where the sleeping fiend was laid.
O ! what wild enchanting grace
Sparkled in her dimpled face !
How the moonlight of her eyes
Glowed and glanced with sweet surprise !
Soft through shadow smiled her lips,
She was beauty in eclipse !
While her fable charms confess
Nature's innocent undress,
Rich her limbs with bracelets shine,
Woman !—woman will be fine !
Brilliant plumes adorned her hair,
Pretty emblems of the fair !
Flowery foliage, trimmed with taste,
Circled her retiring waist !
Light, fantastic, gay and airy,
Nila seemed an Indian fairy !

The startled nymph, with silent awe,
The lovely, dreadful monster saw !

She

She marked the sleek enamelled pride
Of his variegated hide,
Marbled o'er with rainbow dyes,
Like the peacock's spangled eyes ;
Gently heaved the spotty chest
Of his broad, tremendous breast ;
Slumber smoothed his hideous features,
And closed those eyes, that glared like meteors ;
Hushed the deep thunder of his jaws,
And sheathed the terrors of his claws ;
Gentle, inoffensive, mild,
Seemed the savage, grim and wild.

 Nila's bosom, at the sight,
Palpitated with delight ;
On the mossy bank reclining,
In her hands a garland twining,
Unaware of danger near,
Simple Nila knew no fear !
 " Beauteous animal !" she cries,
Pleasure glistening in her eyes ;
 " Here, secure from prowling foes,
 " Slumber on in soft repose !
 " Sweet amusing dreams attend thee !
 " While the mighty Gods defend thee,
 " From

- “ From the lion’s awful jaws ;
“ From the grim hyæna’s claws ;
“ From the panther’s subtle wiles,
“ Lurking where the shubbery smiles ;
“ From the elephant, whose size
“ Lifts the valley to the skies ;
“ From the snake, whose horrid breath
“ Scatters pestilence and death ;
“ From the rage of tigers ghaunt—
“ Tigers, who these regions haunt—
“ Tigers, who—my parents say—
“ Drunk with blood, and gorged with prey,
“ Frantic, still for slaughter yearn—
“ Still with thirst insatiate burn !
“ Fiends, like these, the forest awe !
“ Fiends, which Nila never saw !
“ In this delightful solitude,
“ Those murdering tyrants ne’er intrude ;
“ For, sacred to the Gods above,
“ My father keeps this palmy grove ;
“ Nor further, from her humble home,
“ Permits his daughter’s feet to roam :
“ Here then, charming stranger ! rest,
“ Nila’s friend, companion, guest !
“ With the sweetest herbs I’ll feed thee ;
“ To the purest fountains lead thee ;
“ Here,

“ Here, in gambols, wild and gay,
“ Let us sport our lives away ;
“ This green garland, this shall be
“ Nila’s pledge of love to thee :
“ I crown thee thus, with breathing flowers,
“ The prince of these sequestered bowers !”

Sudden as the lightning’s stroke
Glances on the splintered oak,
At her touch, the tiger sprang—
With his voice the mountains rang :
One pale moment Nila stood,
Then plunged, instinctive, in the flood:
With a roar of thunder hollow,
While the fiend prepared to follow,
Quick and keen, a venomed dart
Quivered in his cruel heart ;
Round he reeled in giddy pain,
Another arrow pierced his brain ;
He groaned, he foamed, he poured his breath,
His spirit vanished into death !

Lost, as in a wandering dream,
Nila floated down the stream ;
The conscious river swelled with bliss,
And every billow snatched a kiss ;

While,

While, soft as thistly embryos sail
On the light pinions of the gale,
Along the circling tide they bore
The lovely Naiad to the shore !

Norvan, from the grove emerging,
Rushed to meet the rescued virgin ;
Norvan, whose victorious bow
Laid the treacherous tiger low ;
Norvan, swiftest in the race,
Matchless in the savage chace ;
Tall and shapely as the palm,
Fierce in war, in council calm ;
Black as night without the moon !
Bold and undisguised as noon !
—Norvan long had wooed in vain ;
But, while Nila scorned his pain,
Love's insinuating dart
Slid so slyly through her heart,
That the nymph, in all her pride,
Sighed—yet scarcely knew she sighed !

Now she saw, with transport sweet,
Gallant Norvan at her feet ;
Though her trembling lips were sealed,
Love her secret soul revealed :

Norvan.

Norvan read, with gay surprise,
Soft concession in her eyes!
Wild with joy, his eager arms
Sprang to clasp her yielding charms;
Starting, like the timid fawn,
Nila vanished o'er the lawn;
He pursued the panting maid
To the cool embowering shade;
Here the flowery wreaths were found,
Which the tiger's temples crowned;
These on Norvan's brows she twined,
Whispering thus, in accents kind:
" Noble youth! accept, though small,
" 'This reward—'tis Nila's all!
" If my champion claims an higher,
" Yonder, Norvan!—dwells my fire!"

Homeward, instantly, she ran;
" Catch me, Norvan!—if you can!"
Norvan, quick as Nila's eyes,
Won the race, and wore the prize!

THE END.

